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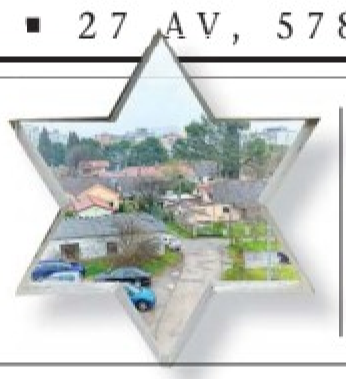

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# *Israel's actions in Gaza in line with BoP framework*

**ANALYSIS**

• By AMICHAI STEIN

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared on Sunday that Israel rejects the 15-point Gaza framework formulated by the Board of Peace. However, could it be that, despite Israel's public statements, the reality on the ground is somewhat different?

If one looks at Israel's actions rather than its public rhetoric, the picture is more complicated. In practice, Israel is currently implementing the 15-point agreement.

For several days now, it has refrained from carrying out targeted killings and has maintained the ceasefire in Gaza. The directive was issued to the military on Monday evening by the IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir, following an instruction from the political leadership. Since then, no targeted killings have been carried out.

At the same time, in terms of Israel's military deployment on the ground, the IDF is effectively positioned along the original Yellow Line, which encompasses approximately 53% of the Gaza Strip, with no current positions or forces deployed beyond.

So, yes. Publicly, Israeli officials are sending strong verbal messages rejecting the 15-point framework. But when it comes to what is actually happening on the ground, the Israeli government is, in practice, adhering to the framework.

The issue of Gaza's reconstruction is more complicated. Israeli statements on this issue have been unequivocal and dramatic: There will be no reconstruction of Gaza before Hamas is fully disarmed.

But there is an important distinction that needs to be made.

The position of the Board of Peace is that what is currently being built in the Rafah area – inside the portion of Gaza under Israeli control – is not permanent reconstruction. Rather, these are temporary structures. However, their deployment requires certain initial infrastructure work.

In other words, while Israel continues to publicly insist that there will be no reconstruction before genuine demilitarization, the activities currently taking place in the Rafah area

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# Netanyahu rejects 15-point BoP plan for reconstruction of Gaza

## *PM tells cabinet IDF 'won't carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed' • 'Any Iran strike will be met by heavy blow'*

• By MIRIAM SELA-EITAM,
DANYA SAPERSTEIN
and TZVI JASPER

PALESTINIANS WALK past the rubble of residential buildings destroyed during the war at the Jabalya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip last week. (Mahmoud Issa/Reuters)

Israel rejected the 15-point plan for the Gaza Strip proposed by the Board of Peace, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared while speaking in a Sunday afternoon cabinet meeting.

"Israel rejects the 15-point Gaza document proposed by the Board of Peace," Netanyahu said. "The IDF will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed."

Netanyahu also reiterated his opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

"As for the Gaza Strip, first of all, I want to make the main point clear: as long as I am prime minister, there will be no Palestinian state, not in Gaza and not in Judea and Samaria. Neither 'Fatahstan' nor 'Hamastan,'" he said.

Netanyahu added that Israel was currently in talks with the US about the disarmament of Hamas, but emphasized that it would need to be "genuine disarmament, not fictitious disarmament."

"When I say Hamas is disarmed, that means the heavy weapons, the less heavy weapons – all the weapons," he said.

Israel would stand its ground on which US proposals it finds unacceptable, Netanyahu added.

Netanyahu also addressed rumors regarding Israel's activity in Lebanon.

"In recent days, Israel has

*See BOP, Page 7*

# *Saudi-Turkish-Pakistani pact will cause India-Israel ties to grow*

**ANALYSIS**

• By HERB KEINON

PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi meet in Jerusalem in February. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Last Thursday, in what at the time seemed out of the blue, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X/Twitter that he had received a phone call from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and that they "exchanged views on the current situation in West Asia."

He also wrote, "We reviewed progress on various aspects of the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership which continues to grow from strength to strength."

Modi posted the message in English and Hebrew, and Netanyahu reposted it.

Only the next day would the full context become clear. On Friday, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey signed a sweeping mutual defense treaty, dubbed the Mecca Pact because of the city where it was finalized.

It is difficult to imagine that the looming pact was not a major focus of the Netanyahu-Modi conversation. While the public only saw the treaty signed on Friday, Jerusalem and New Delhi would almost certainly have been aware that a significant regional realignment was in the works.

When the leaders exchanged views "on recent developments in West Asia," they were addressing one of the largest structural shifts in the region's security architecture in years.

For years, Washington pushed a vision of a US-led regional security architecture integrating Israel with Saudi Arabia and other pragmatic Arab states. But that's not what transpired in Mecca, and Modi and Netanyahu were surely discussing the ramifications of a very different tripartite alignment.

One major ramification Modi alluded to was the "progress on various aspects of the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership."

The announcement in Mecca will certainly add fuel to moving that partnership forward at full speed. That's the way the world works: actions cause reactions, which in turn spark new arrangements.

On Friday, after the signing of this accord – which the Pakistani Foreign Ministry confirmed contains a NATO-style Article 5 clause meaning an attack on one is an attack on all – *The Wall Street Journal* summarized the moment perfectly: "When a superpower flails about, regional powers begin to make arrangements for themselves."

The superpower here is the US, and the flailing is its execution of the war in Iran. Saudi Arabia, having lost confidence in the American security umbrella alone to provide the protection it feels it needs, is

*See PACT, Page 7*

# Iran says Oman deal close but US must act to open Hormuz

• By NAYERA ABDALLAH,
STEVE HOLLAND
and ENAS ALASHRAY

DUBAI/WASHINGTON/CAIRO (Reuters) – Iran said on Sunday that a deal with Oman defining new shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz was in its final stages but reiterated that the waterway would reopen only once the United States met other conditions.

A US official told Reuters on Friday that an agreement between Iran and Oman was close and could soon reopen the waterway, which carried a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments before Iran blocked it in response to US and Israeli attacks.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday an agreement on the strait that lies between the two countries was in the "final stages," but repeated comments made on Saturday that it would not reopen it unless other conditions were met.

The agreement would set out the new shipping lanes to be used once the US fulfills those conditions and the strait is reopened, Iran's Mehr news agency quoted him as saying.

Iran and the US are not engaged in talks, and Tehran will not start them as long as Washington breaches an interim deal signed in June, Araghchi said, adding that messages are being exchanged via intermediaries.

The US began air strikes on Iran in late February, saying it aimed to ensure the Islamic Republic could not acquire nuclear weapons or threaten the region with missiles or proxies.

It agreed to a ceasefire with Iran in June, but reimposed a blockade on Iranian shipping in the Gulf in July, which Tehran said was a violation of the truce that had already broken down.

"Once the deal is announced to restore commercial shipping without impediments, the United States will lift the blockade of Iranian ports," the US official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

US actions would be tied to Iran's implementation of its commitments, the official said.

The US comments indicated delicate sequencing towards a deal that sources had told Reuters appeared to be set to give Tehran control over ships entering the Gulf through the strait, something shippers said was not easily workable.

The latest status of the agreement was unclear, and Iran's response suggested other factors would also come into play.

Araqchi said reopening the strait would depend on conditions including US compensation to Iran for its widespread attacks.

The secretary of Iran's top national security body, Mohammad Bagher Zolqadr, also listed ending US threats against Iran, stopping aggression against Iran and its Lebanese, Palestinian, Yemeni, and Iraqi allies, lifting a blockade

*See HORMUZ, Page 7*

# Arab Joint List deal collapses as MK Tibi rejects proposed slate

• By KESHET NEEV

Three of the four major Arab parties, Hadash, Ta'al, and Balad, failed to reach an agreement on running together in a Joint List ahead of the upcoming elections after Ta'al leader MK Ahmad Tibi rejected the proposed Knesset slate for the alliance on Sunday.

The collapse of the negotiations could change the dynamics of how the Arab parties run in the October 27 elections. Polls have shown that the parties could win more seats if they run together than if they run separately.

The fallout came after the internal Arab-led Reconciliation Committee, which helped form the Joint List in 2015, presented how the alliance would be divided.

Hadash, Ta'al, and Balad had empowered the committee to determine the final makeup of the joint slate to avoid prolonging negotiations after disagreements.

The proposal showed the Ta'al party receiving the second and ninth slots on the slate.

"There has been a breakdown in the talks," a Hadash spokesperson told *The Jerusalem Post,* following the announcement of the Reconciliation Committee's proposal.

Both Hadash and Balad leaders had welcomed the proposal and agreed to work in accordance with it, leaving Tibi as the sole party leader rejecting the proposed slate.

According to a KAN News report, two members of the Reconciliation Committee announced their resignations after the breakdown of negotiations.

*See JOINT, Page 7*

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# *After 24 years of work, Nefesh B'Nefesh welcomes its 100,000th new immigrant*

• By JOSH ARONSON

99,996TH OLEH
99,997TH OLEH
99,998TH OLEH
99,999TH OLEH
100,000TH OLAH

THE DOUGLAS FAMILY, including Nefesh B'Nefesh's 100,000th olah, celebrate their immigration to Israel yesterday. (Yonit Schiller/Nefesh B'Nefesh)

Twenty-four years after Nefesh B'Nefesh was founded, the organization marked a major milestone on Sunday with the arrival of its 100,000th immigrant from North America.

Six-year-old Amelia Douglas, who will begin first grade in the coming school year, immigrated to Israel with her family: her parents, Jeffrey and Atara; her brother, Netanel, 10; and her sister, Hallie, 9.

To mark the occasion, President Isaac Herzog hosted the Douglas family at the President's Residence after they immigrated from New York to Jerusalem earlier this month. The event was attended by Aliyah and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer and Nefesh B'Nefesh founders Rabbi Yehoshua Fass and Tony Gelbart.

Herzog welcomed the family at the event and praised the organization's work.

"I am pleased to welcome the Douglas family to Israel, and especially six-year-old Amelia, who is the 100,000th immigrant to make aliyah to Israel through Nefesh B'Nefesh," Herzog said. "One hundred thousand immigrants are 100,000 stories of people who chose Israel, chose to build their home and their future here, and became part of the Israeli story."

The president added that the Douglas family is "a living example of the deep connection between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel," and

*See IMMIGRANT, Page 7*

# Six face murder charges in Benayahu Razi killing

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

ONE OF the suspects in the murder of Benayahu Razi last month is brought to her hearing at the District Court in Jerusalem on Friday. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

Four minors and two young women were indicted on Friday for the murder of 19-year-old Benayahu Razi, who was stabbed to death in a Jerusalem Airbnb last month after a dispute involving his former partner escalated into an armed confrontation.

Seven people were indicted in total, but prosecutors accuse them of different roles in the killing.

Agam Tzarfati, 19, of Jerusalem, Shilat Huta, 20, of Beersheba, and four minors aged approximately 15 to 17 were charged with murder and aggravated assault. Prosecutors allege that the six decided together to attack Razi and his friend, while the four minors carried out the physical assault that killed him.

The seventh defendant, Linor Sasson, 46, of Jerusalem, was charged with assisting after the fact and obstruction of justice for allegedly helping members of the group flee after the attack.

According to the indictments, Tzarfati remained in a car outside the apartment during the attack. Huta went upstairs with the four minors and was present as the confrontation developed, including making a video call to Tzarfati while it was taking place.

Prosecutors nevertheless charge both women with Razi's murder, alleging that they had joined the four minors in deciding beforehand to attack him and his friend.

The four minors were also charged with unlawful possession of knives and obstruction of justice. Prosecutors have asked the Jerusalem District Court to keep all seven defendants in custody until the end of proceedings against them.

According to the indictments, Tzarfati and Razi had been in a relationship.

On July 9, Tzarfati and Huta rented an Airbnb apartment on Shirizli Street in Jerusalem for three days and invited Razi and his friend to spend the weekend there with them.

A dispute broke out between the four the following day. Prosecutors said they do not know precisely what happened during that altercation.

The next afternoon, Tzarfati and Huta left the apartment while Razi and his friend were sleeping.

They later told Huta's sister and others that Razi had been violent toward them and that they were afraid to return to the apartment.

The two women went to Sasson's home in Jerusalem's Neve Yaakov neighborhood. The four minors later arrived there and heard Tzarfati and Huta's account of what had happened.

It was at Sasson's home, prosecutors allege, that Tzarfati, Huta and the four minors decided together to attack Razi and his friend, saying that they intended to "finish him."

The four minors then allegedly armed themselves with two knives, a folding metal baton, a spike, razor blades and a metal meat tenderizer.

Later that afternoon, Huta exchanged messages with Razi's friend and warned that he and Razi should leave the apartment. Tzarfati also sent Razi threatening messages as the group headed back toward the area, according to the indictment.

At around 6:30 p.m., Sasson allegedly drove Tzarfati, Huta and the four minors toward the apartment. During the drive, prosecutors said, the minors continued talking about their intention to "finish" Razi. The indictment states that Sasson warned them not to do anything.

When they arrived, Tzarfati and Sasson remained in the car while Huta and the four minors walked toward the apartment.

They found Razi and his friend sitting in a car nearby. One of the minors, who knew Razi, approached and asked to speak with him. The group then convinced the two men to go back up to the apartment with them, saying they wanted to talk.

Inside, the four minors confronted Razi over the claim that he had hit Tzarfati. According to the indictment, Razi denied hitting her.

Huta, standing at the entrance to the room, then made a video call to Tzarfati, allowing Tzarfati and Sasson to see what was happening inside.

After a brief exchange, one of the minors allegedly pulled out the metal baton and struck Razi in the face and shoulder.

The four minors then drew the weapons they had brought and attacked him, prosecutors alleged.

Prosecutors allege that two of the minors then stabbed Razi in the arm and chest, although they have not determined which of the three carried out the stabbings.

Razi's friend tried to reach him and was attacked as well. Prosecutors allege that he was kicked, struck in the arm with the metal meat tenderizer, and stabbed in the hand.

The stab wound to Razi's lower left chest penetrated his chest cavity and struck his heart, causing severe blood loss that led to his death.

The group fled immediately after the attack.

According to the indictment, one of the minors wiped two knives as they escaped, while another discarded a knife he had taken from the apartment.

Sasson later picked up the four minors in her car. Prosecutors allege that once inside, they said Razi was dead and discussed leaving Jerusalem.

One of the minors later separated from the others and remained in hiding for more than two weeks before police arrested him.

POLICE HAD taken the unusual step of publicly releasing the 17-year-old suspect's name and photograph while he was still at large in an effort to locate him. He was arrested on July 28 following a two-week manhunt.

The killing followed a troubled history between Razi and Tzarfati. Ynet reported that Razi filed a police complaint in September 2025 alleging that Tzarfati was harassing him and threatening his life, and that several men had come to his home and threatened to kill him.

Several other reports note that complaints had been made by both sides during their relationship. Those earlier allegations are separate from what prosecutors say occurred during the weekend of Razi's death.

In its request to keep all seven defendants in custody, the prosecution said the evidence includes security-camera footage documenting parts of the incident and the group's escape, statements by Tzarfati and Huta about the minors arming themselves ahead of the attack, partial admissions by the minors, the surviving friend's account, phone evidence and DNA findings.

Attorneys Idan Gamlielli and Ofer Ehrlich of the Public Defender's Office, who represent one of the minors, said they had not yet received the investigation material when the indictment was filed.

"Even from an initial review of the indictment, a picture emerges of an unplanned and unfolding event that ended tragically," they said.

The minor denies directly causing Razi's death, they added, saying they would present their arguments in court after receiving and reviewing the evidence.

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# *Court rejects Bluth appeal over house arrest of settler suspected of nationalist violence*

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

The Jerusalem District Court on Sunday rejected an appeal by IDF Central Command chief Maj.-Gen. Avi Bluth over an administrative restriction order imposed on settler Tal Yinon Dardik, while leaving intact the finding that Dardik poses a security risk and should remain under full house arrest.

Judge Avraham Dan Rubin upheld an earlier military appeals committee decision that the order against Dardik was justified, but that he could not be required to serve the house arrest specifically at his mother-in-law's home in the West Bank settlement of Adei Ad without her consent.

The ruling therefore does not remove the restrictions against Dardik or determine that he should be released. What it does, is leave Bluth free to set new conditions for the house arrest. Rubin said the ruling would not take effect until Tuesday at 11 a.m., giving Bluth time to set new conditions.

"The starting point in the proceeding before me is that the respondent poses a danger which justifies full house arrest," Rubin wrote, noting that Dardik had not challenged that finding as part of the appeal before the District Court.

The case has become the latest flash point in a widening dispute between Bluth and Defense Minister Israel Katz over the military's use of administrative restrictions against Jewish extremists suspected of nationalist violence in the West Bank.

Dardik is suspected of involvement in attacks against Palestinians and other nationalist-motivated offenses, including a suspected attack in March. With insufficient evidence at the time to bring criminal charges over the suspected nationalist offenses, Bluth issued the administrative order on June 9 following a Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) recommendation.

The order required Dardik to remain under full house arrest for six months at his mother-in-law's home in Adei Ad. Dardik argued that he could not comply because she refused to allow him to stay there. He nevertheless did not comply with the order while his appeal was pending, and prosecutors subsequently charged him with six counts of violating a lawful order.

Dardik remains in custody in that separate criminal case after failing to propose an alternative and refusing to undertake to comply with the military order, according to Sunday's ruling.

Rubin stressed that the appeal before him did not concern whether Dardik should remain detained in the criminal proceedings, saying that question must be decided separately by the court handling that case.

THE MILITARY appeals committee ruled on July 26 that intelligence presented to it supported the assessment that Dardik posed a danger to security in the area and justified both the administrative order and full house arrest.

It found, however, that the military commander could not compel a third party to house Dardik against that person's wishes, and therefore struck only the provision requiring him to remain at his mother-in-law's home.

Bluth did not appeal that finding. Instead, he argued that after removing the provision, the committee should itself have imposed replacement conditions rather than sending the matter back to the military commander to issue new ones.

Rubin rejected that argument, finding that the committee had the authority to choose either course and that its decision to leave new restrictions to Bluth did not justify the District Court's intervention.

The court noted that several alternatives had already been discussed, including house arrest at another approved location, restrictions within a wider defined area under electronic monitoring, and residence at Dardik's parents' home. The sides had failed to agree on an alternative.

Rubin said Bluth could now set new conditions, which Dardik would in turn be entitled to challenge before the military appeals committee. He also raised the possibility of requiring Dardik to stay at the home of another person who consented to host him, or imposing geographically defined restrictions under electronic monitoring.

The case comes amid a broader dispute between Katz and Bluth over the military's use of administrative restrictions against Jewish extremists suspected of violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

In July, Katz had pushed back against Bluth's use of restriction orders, after the defense minister had already ended the use of administrative detention against Jewish suspects.

Katz has taken a personal interest in Dardik's case, visiting him in detention and publicly criticizing the restriction order. Last week, during an interview on Channel 14, Katz said he would remove Bluth from his position, saying the decision to appeal the military committee's ruling had been taken contrary to his position. Katz later backed away from the threat.

Sunday's judgment, however, upheld the central security assessment underlying Bluth's action.

Rubin wrote that the original decision to issue the order was "justified, proportionate and reasonable," and that the finding that Dardik posed a danger to security in the area remained in force.

*Yonah Jeremy Bob contributed to this report.*

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# Gov't has abandoned PR war, needs 'hasbara army' led by a 'chief of staff,' Erdan tells 'Post'

INTERVIEW

•By SAM HALPERN
and KESHET NEEV

New right-wing party leader and former Israeli ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan called for Israel to create an "army of hasbara" led by a public diplomacy "chief of staff" and said that the government had "abandoned" the battle over Israel's global image.

"You need an army of *hasbara* (public diplomacy) and PR that would be led by a Ramatkal (IDF chief of staff) of hasbara," Erdan told *The Jerusalem Post* following his Thursday announcement that he was launching a new right-wing party.

"It never happened. You don't have it. You have only one agency here, one agency there. You have few people with little money. They can't fight with their arms tied behind their backs," he continued.

Erdan attributed Israel's current public diplomacy problems, at least in part, to what he described as government neglect.

"The Israeli government abandoned maybe one of the most important battles that we were supposed to fight: the fight for the truth and the narrative," Erdan said.

Erdan blamed the government's approach for having "led up to the situation" that Israel is in now: losing support from both American Democrats and younger Republicans.

He said he had been told directly by leaders of Turning Point USA, the conservative advocacy nonprofit founded by late conservative activist Charlie Kirk, that Israel was "losing the young generation of the Republican Party."

FORMER UN AMBASSADOR Gilad Erdan speaks at a press conference in Tel Aviv on Thursday announcing the establishment of a new right-wing party under his and MK Yuli Edelstein's leadership ahead of the upcoming elections. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

"So I know exactly what should be done," Erdan continued. "I have a comprehensive plan on how we should work there to portray Israel in the right way, how to be on the offensive, and how to expose the true face of our enemies, Qatar, and others."

"I learned a lot from what Students for Justice in Palestine and others have been doing against us to delegitimize Israel," he said.

Asked how Israel could turn around the narrative war, Erdan pointed in part to what he described as a major funding gap.

"When I arrived at the UN as the ambassador, I was shocked at my public diplomacy budget," he said. "It started with $10,000 for public activities in New York."

Despite Israel maintaining an embassy and eight consulates across the US, Erdan argued that its diplomatic missions lacked the resources needed for effective public diplomacy.

Erdan contrasted Israel's public diplomacy spending with Qatar's, which he said had successfully invested in "soft diplomacy" in the US despite having a much smaller economy.

According to the World Bank Group, Israel's GDP stood at $610.78 billion last year, compared with Qatar's $215.56 billion.

Given Israel's nominal GDP advantage, Erdan said, "if they can spend on soft diplomacy and legitimize their crimes and whitewash, pinkwash, whatever you want to call it, their image," Israel should be capable of mounting a much better-funded and more effective public diplomacy effort.

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# Prosecutors signal indictment over attacks on media outlets, Justice Ministry

• By SARAH BEN-NUN

Prosecutors filed a declaration of intent to indict a Ramat Gan man on Sunday over his suspected involvement in five incidents of property damage and extortion by threats targeting several Israeli media outlets and the Justice Ministry, police said.

The man, in his 40s, was arrested on July 30 following a weeks-long investigation. Police said investigators collected evidence linking him to attacks on buildings housing Channel 12, *Haaretz*, *Israel Hayom*, and the Justice Ministry during July.

According to police, bricks were thrown at entrance doors in the attacks, which investigators suspect were intended to intimidate media organizations and influence the way they covered the news.

The most recent publicly reported incident took place in the early hours of July 28, when a masked individual threw two bricks at the glass entrance to Channel 12's Tel Aviv offices, shattering the doors. A threatening letter was left nearby demanding that the network apologize for its coverage of the Sde Teiman affair and warning that further violence would follow if it did not.

"Until you apologize over the Sde Teiman affair, I am not stopping," the letter said, warning that the next brick would be directed at the head of a Channel 12 employee and that "someone will end up dead."

Police said Sunday that the suspect is believed to have left the letter at the entrance to the building.

The July 28 attack was the second time Channel 12's entrance had been smashed that month. On July 5, security footage showed a masked individual approaching the building shortly after 3 a.m. and throwing two bricks at the entrance, the second of which shattered the glass door. Police opened an investigation at the time.

Three days later, on July 8, the entrance to *Haaretz's* Tel Aviv offices was also targeted. Security footage showed a masked individual throwing two bricks through the entrance gate, with one smashing a hole in the newspaper's glass door. *Haaretz* filed a police complaint and said it had increased security at the building following the attack.

Sunday's police statement also linked the investigation to damage at buildings housing *Israel Hayom* and the Justice Ministry, though no further details were provided about the damage.

Investigators said they identified the suspect through technological means and undercover investigative work before arresting him on July 30. During a search of his home, police seized clothing and other evidence that they said linked him to the offenses under investigation.

His detention has since been extended several times.

The prosecutor's declaration filed Sunday is a procedural step indicating that prosecutors intend to file an indictment. Police said an indictment is expected in the coming days.

Police said they viewed attempts to intimidate journalists and media organizations particularly seriously, adding that they would act against the use of violence or threats intended to interfere with journalists' work.

# Israel's Gaza restraint may allow Hamas to regain power

ANALYSIS

• By AMIR BOHBOT

The IDF has achieved significant gains in the Gaza Strip, particularly over the past year, during which it created a well-oiled machine for locating, mapping, and destroying terrorist infrastructure above and below ground.

As a result, the IDF currently controls between 65% and roughly 70% of the Gaza Strip, depending on whom you ask.

At the same time, Southern Command chief Maj.-Gen. Yaniv Asor, who will soon compete for the position of deputy IDF chief of staff, advanced a very clear policy of thwarting terrorism through airstrikes.

The strikes are directed at anyone who took part in October 7, with an emphasis on operatives who crossed the border into Israeli territory, as well as those currently advancing terrorist activity against Israel and rebuilding the capabilities of Hamas's military wing.

This involves precise intelligence from the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), which does not receive proper credit for its achievements, from the IDF Intelligence Directorate, and aerial firepower capabilities.

A senior officer told Walla that "this is high-quality intelligence and the exploitation of operational opportunities."

However, in recent weeks, amid pressure from new Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, as well as Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates on the US, there has been a significant shift in the approach toward Israeli activity in the Gaza Strip.

First, Israel gave in to US pressure and approved the entry of approximately 200 members of a multinational force into the Gaza Strip before Hamas had disarmed and transferred responsibility to the technocratic government.

Soon after criticism emerged from the defense establishment over the pragmatism the government showed toward US President Donald Trump's peace plan, while ignoring Hamas's ability to rebuild and reestablish itself in the Gaza Strip, particularly its military wing, a decision was made to completely halt targeted killings in the Gaza Strip.

On this issue, criticism can be directed at the Israeli government, which insisted on preventing the Palestinian Authority from becoming involved in the Strip, and, on the other hand, at the policies of Trump, envoy Nikolay Mladenov, and the technocratic government, which are rushing to rehabilitate southern Gaza.

They have done so without presenting a strong framework capable of preventing Hamas from returning to rule the entire strip, including the area that is supposed to be "terror-free" in the Rafah area.

In practice, what is happening is that the US and Israeli policies are allowing actors hostile to Israel, such as Qatar and Turkey, to expand their influence in Gaza and over Israel.

The US approach to establishing a new Rafah is also raising questions among professionals.

They say the quality of the buildings and infrastructure, and the speed at which the Americans want contractors to complete them, make no sense and are inconsistent with the idea of establishing a municipal system capable of absorbing 50,000 Palestinians not involved in terrorism.

As if that were not enough, it was learned that a Nukhba operative who was directly involved in Oct. 7 was arrested near the Kerem Shalom Crossing by the Shin Bet and the IDF after receiving authorization to work as a driver transporting humanitarian aid.

An analysis of the developments surrounding the Gaza Strip suggests that the government's policy in Gaza is beginning to become dangerous and could lead to further negative developments.

# Latest Arrow test shows severity of Iran threat

ANALYSIS

• By UDI ETZION

Last week, Israel's defense establishment conducted another test of the Arrow system, the country's primary air defense system against ballistic missiles from Iran and Yemen.

Arrow is a veteran weapons system whose development at Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) began in the 1980s. Its capabilities were ahead of much of the rest of the world, and it entered operational service more than 25 years ago.

The system has successfully intercepted hundreds of missiles from Iran and Yemen over the past two years, and it is finally securing its place in the national consciousness as Iron Dome's "big sister."

It is tasked with confronting far more lethal threats, as Israelis learned from the few cases in which Arrow failed to intercept its target.

THE ARROW air defense system. (Defense Ministry)

Unlike weapons systems that may only be mentioned with the prefix "according to foreign sources," Arrow is not classified. It was developed with US funding, the Pentagon closely follows its development, and American companies participated in its serial production.

The Arrow system was also sold to Germany in two deals worth a combined $6.5 billion. Components of the system, including its radar, have also been sold separately to other countries, such as India and South Korea.

Under normal circumstances, Arrow tests are a national event. Tens of thousands of residents in central Israel can see them when the missile is launched from the IAF's test unit at Palmachim, with its trail visible from great distances.

The launch is usually followed by breaking news alerts, reports, interviews with senior defense officials along with expressions of thanks to the American partners.

Explanations are often released about the system's new capabilities and latest modifications but this time there was silence.

As an arms race rages between Iran, which is working to replenish and upgrade its missile stockpiles, and Israel, which continues to upgrade its defense system and interceptor inventory, officials decided not to release any information about the test.

On the one hand, the decision is legitimate and responsible during wartime, allowing officials to focus on their work without providing unnecessary information.

On the other hand, it also reflects how the defense establishment views the Iranians.

Unlike politicians, from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz to Knesset members and associates who repeatedly boast of total victory in Tehran, the professionals are not underestimating the Iranians, their capabilities, or their motivation.

Israel may be technologically advanced and demonstrated during the war capabilities possessed by no other country in the world; yet there are those within the defense establishment who understand that the enemy facing Israel is also a country with significant capabilities.

Iran is not a weak or disintegrating country. It is an enemy whose ability to learn and develop must be taken seriously, and one Israel must continue preparing to confront precisely because it is not weak.

Iran has a population 10 times larger than Israel's, is rich in oil, and over the years has developed a weapons and terror industry unmatched by any other Middle Eastern country.

This is an important campaign, and the Arrow cannot win it alone. The conduct surrounding the test tells the public the truth that the political echelon is trying to hide.

THE JERUSALEM POST
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# ‘Mecca pact hasn’t killed normalization hopes’

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

The new defense pact signed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey, though far from ideal for Israel, “doesn’t shut the door completely on normalization” between Riyadh and Jerusalem, Dr. Yoel Guzansky, head of the Gulf Research Field at the Institute for National Security Studies, told *The Jerusalem Post* on Sunday.

The three Sunni-majority countries signed the defense agreement on Friday, after months of attacks from Iran and its proxies on Gulf States.

Though unclear how the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement’s actions will materialize, the member states said in a joint statement that it would strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and it stipulates that an armed attack against any of the three would be regarded as an attack on all.

Saudi Arabia, the country hit the hardest of all three, likely joined the pact to have more leverage and options as trust in Washington is waning in the region, Guzansky said.

“Countries need stability. Saudis need stability. It’s also a sign of, let’s say, question marks over the US’s readiness and ability to assist the Gulf states,” he explained.

“The Saudis feel that they cannot count on the US – not because the US doesn’t want to, but because this administration, like almost every administration, has political, economic and military constraints and limitations. So they need more. This is hedging.”

Though there were theories that Iran’s attacks would push Gulf States to embrace Israel more closely for its defensive and technological capabilities, Guzansky said Jerusalem’s growing reputation as a “hegemon” made such an embrace difficult, particularly given the perception that Israel is engaged in “endless wars,” which is not a sign of the much-desired stability Riyadh seeks.

With Jerusalem not being viewed as a viable partner for Riyadh, Guzansky was blunt about his concerns over what it would mean for Saudi Arabia to embrace countries so openly hostile to Israel.

“I’m worried because the Turks and Pakistanis have a really anti-Israel stance that might affect Saudi Arabia. I’m hoping that Saudi Arabia will affect them, but it would perhaps be too naive to think so,” he said.

“It will not officially be aimed at Israel, per se, but these are countries that are worried about Israel. Most of them are anti-Israel.”

Notably, only a day after the pact was announced, Pakistan’s Defense Minister Khawaja Asif told Pakistan media that there should be “a united military front” against Israel, which he described as a “threat to the entire Muslim world.”

“Their attitude towards the Palestinians and their anti-Islamic mindset will not disappear. They continue to incite Muslim countries against each other,” he said, seemingly pointing blame at Israel for the attacks from Iran on Muslim states.

“And as long as the Palestinian issue is not permanently resolved, the Islamic world must stand against them as one.”

From Ankara’s side, Guzansky said, “The Turks see themselves as a regional power.”

“They are very sensitive to Israel and what Israel is doing. [Turkish President Tayyip] Erdogan is very negative, to say the least, towards Israel. He’s anti-Israel. He’s an antisemite,” he continued.

TURKISH PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hold their copies of the joint defense agreement in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on Friday. (Saudi Press Agency/Handout via Reuters)

With rumors of other countries looking to join the pact, namely Qatar and Egypt, Guzansky warned that the outlook “doesn’t look good” for Israel, especially given Doha’s propaganda capabilities with Al Jazeera.

Guzansky theorized that the pact would be little more than diplomatic, with the possibility of sending some defensive equipment, stating that he doubted Turkey’s willingness to go to war against Iran.

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# US may give Beirut $200m to help disarm Hezbollah

• By DANIELLE GREYMAN-KENNARD

Lebanon could receive $200 million annually in US security assistance to support the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces in countering Hezbollah if the Lebanon Sanctions, Stabilization, and Support Act introduced in Congress on Friday is enacted.

The act, introduced by US Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and James Lankford (R-OK), could eventually provide as much as $300 million annually if Beirut makes progress in disarming the Iran-backed group, disrupting foreign military financing to Hezbollah, and tackling the trafficking of Captagon and other illicit substances by the group.

In addition to the $200 million, $25 million would be provided for narcotics control; $11.5 m. for nonproliferation, anti-terrorism, demining, and related programs; and $3.5 m. for international military education and training in the first fiscal year.

Those enabling Hezbollah’s continued armed presence, permitting the transfer of Iranian funds to the group, or thwarting attempts to reform Lebanon’s financial sector would also be subjected to US sanctions.

“For the first time in decades, Lebanon has a real chance to reclaim its sovereignty, disarm Hezbollah and break free from Iran’s malign influence, but success depends on sustained American support,” said Shaheen.

“That’s why I’m proud to introduce the bipartisan Lebanon Sanctions, Stabilization, and Support Act with Sen. Lankford. It combines tough sanctions on Hezbollah’s enablers with targeted security and recovery assistance as well as congressional oversight.

“This legislation helps the Lebanese state extend its authority and build toward a peaceful future with its neighbors. A sovereign, stable Lebanon is firmly in America’s interests, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.”

With a new round of talks between Beirut and Jerusalem just completed, and slow progress on Lebanon’s policing of pilot zones under a US-backed framework aimed at securing an Israeli withdrawal from the country, the bill comes as hopes grow that Iran’s influence in Lebanon could be challenged.

“For decades, Iran has used Hezbollah to destabilize Lebanon, Israel, and threaten Americans who live in the region, but (US) President (Donald) Trump has created a real opening for change by bringing Israel and Lebanon to the table for the first direct talks in 30 years,” said Lankford.

“That’s why I’m proud to introduce the Lebanon Sanctions, Stabilization, and Support Act with Sen. Shaheen. Our bill imposes tough sanctions on the network financing Hezbollah and provides security assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

“A sovereign Lebanon protects Lebanese, Israeli, and American citizens living in the region, and puts real pressure on the terrorists.”

The bipartisan bill would authorize mechanisms to provide the state with the opportunity to integrate Lebanon’s Shi’ite citizens who have been largely reliant on Hezbollah’s civil services.

The bill hopes the fund, which could be used to help infrastructure recover and expand state civil services, could help further incentivize Lebanon to combat Hezbollah.

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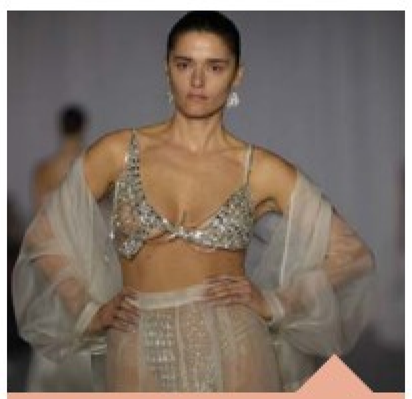
- Communicated -

# What's new?

Bath & Body Works has landed from a distant galaxy with a limited-edition Star Wars collection inspired by Grogu and The Mandalorian.

After 15 years of research: Wilk is launching a cosmetics product line based on fats extracted from human breast milk. These unique products were developed by the Israeli biotechnology company Wilk Technologies and are entering the market for the first time following years of research and development focused on human milk proteins and fats and understanding their properties.

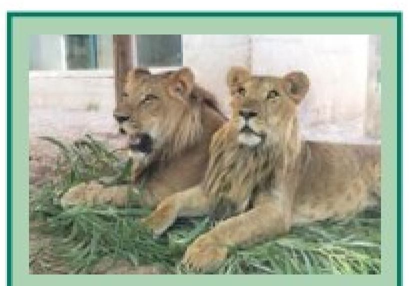

Following last year’s massive success, Israel Canada Tel Aviv Fashion Week 2026 is officially returning and will take place from November 8 to 12, 2026, at the 7 Kreminitzky Street complex owned by Israel Canada, the main sponsor for the second consecutive year.

Laline is launching Therapy, a new body care collection inspired by the power of natural essential oils for a pampering home spa experience. The collection includes a wide range of body, hand, and hair care products, including shower gel, body lotion, body oil, hand cream, hand soap, body mist, shampoo, and conditioner. All products were developed with rich formulas and pampering textures, combining naturally derived ingredients with high-quality components to create a luxurious user experience.

Superpharm recently hosted its annual summer event, the Sweet Summer Party. Among those in attendance were Nitzan Lavi, CEO of Superpharm, and Danny Luzon, deputy CEO of Superpharm. The event was also attended by Liron Weizman, Talia Ovadia, Anne Zivi, Yarden Vizel, Mai Hatuel, Yohanan Twina, Yuval Kaspit, Noya Arieli and Dor Taub, Hadar Shiri, Tomer Telias, Libar Balilti, Yotam Gavriel, Nofar Mor, Nadir Eliyahu, Ofir Dan, Dvir Solomon and Lia Noga, Emma Alfi, Lihi Freud, and others.

Last night Arkia launched operations with a Boeing 787-900 Dreamliner aircraft from the Italian airline Neos. The plane joins the company’s fleet for August and September to bolster high-demand routes to New York, Paris, and Amsterdam and increase seat capacity during the summer season. The aircraft features 345 spacious seats, a premium class alongside economy class, and paid in-flight Wi-Fi service. To mark the introduction of the aircraft, Arkia held a festive gate ceremony on its inaugural flight to JFK Airport in New York.

Shira Oren Nahmias, deputy CEO of the Oranim Group and developer of Israel’s first resort-living project, Sea One, hosted clients and friends at the opening of the “Sea One Art” exhibition.


Two young lions rescued last year as part of the crackdown on illegal wildlife trafficking were transferred this week to a big cat sanctuary in South Africa. “They are going to live the best lives we can possibly offer them,” the Israel Nature and Parks Authority said.

Unapologetic femininity: Carolina Abram is launching her new line of sunglasses and optical frames - Pure - a celebration of powerful femininity, bold design, and stylish presence.

Kenyon HaZahav is offering a summer of experiences, games, and adventures for the whole family. This summer, Kenyon HaZahav will feature three unique experience zones for children and families: “Children’s Kingdom,” a colorful, experience-filled summer zone; Builder City, an interactive complex simulating a real construction city; and Boom Tank, a virtual tank-simulator arena.

The City Time Group launched the summer 2026 collection of the Roso kitchenware brand by Cook and Bake at a festive event attended by Yoni Katzan, vice president of business development for City Time Group; Danel Ettinger, vice president of marketing for City Time Group; and Maya Tal, brand manager for Cook and Bake. The event showcased the new summer collection, based on a mix-and-match concept, featuring a variety of cooking, baking, entertaining, and kitchen accessories in summer shades.

Telma is bringing back its beloved Bran Flakes cereal with new recipes.

תלמה
ברנפלקס
ללא תוספת סוכר

The King David Hotel Jerusalem hosted its traditional reception for the new ambassadors of Germany, Chile, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Honduras to Israel.

The Sabon body care chain is launching a new limited-edition summer scent - Papaya Loquat - offering a refreshing tropical fragrance for a summery pampering routine.

Yossi Schwartz, founder and CEO of the City Market chain, and Holon Mayor Shai Kenan met at the Holon Scouts summer camp to turn the spirit of volunteerism into reality.

Hamsbir is entering the dermacosmetics sector for the first time with a variety of leading brands. The chain will market products from top dermacosmetics brands, including CeraVe, La Roche-Posay, Vichy, and Sebocalm. The Israeli dermacosmetics market is estimated at approximately NIS 600 million annually and is growing at a double-digit rate each year. The products will be sold on the chain’s website.

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For the eighth consecutive year, Bank Hapoalim has announced the opening of registration for the “Poalim LeHatzlacha” scholarship fund, through which it will award NIS 1.2 million to students.

Dan Caesarea Resort will host a luxury pop-up by FaceClub for August only.

Arkia is strengthening its customer service division: Mira Fizitski has been appointed head of customer experience and service.

**Legends in Sharonim**

Looking for a summer activity that combines adventure, courage, competition, play and imagination for the whole family? The Sharonim meex area in Hod Hasharon has become a world of adventure, where children are the real stars of the story.

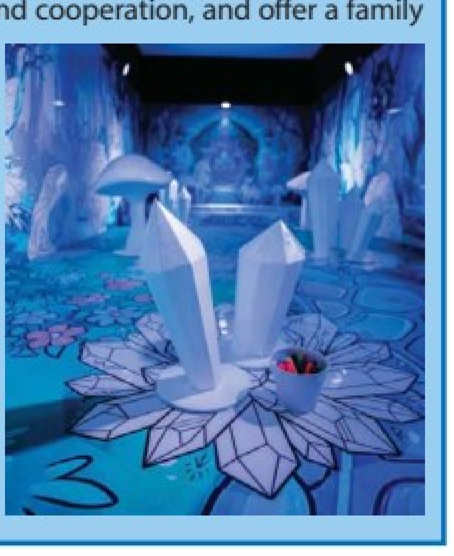
LEGENDS is a new experience that invites visitors to embark on a journey following four superheroes with special powers, who work to restore the energy, colors and joy of summer to the world.

At the entrance to the area, children are exposed to the opening chapter of the plot, and along the route they will continue to discover short story segments that will introduce them to the adventure and make them an integral part of it.

During the visit, children will move between seven activity areas, each of which presents children with a different challenge: courage, agility, accuracy, resourcefulness, creativity, imagination and energy, and all this through active activities, games and experiences.

Among the attractions waiting for them are a laser beam maze, a laser tag arena, a ropes course, a mirror maze, a costume and beauty area where they can transform themselves into Legends heroes, as well as a colorful creative area.

The activities combine challenge, movement, thinking, play and cooperation, and offer a family experience suitable for children aged 3-10.



The meex Sharonim complex offers a comprehensive experience for the whole family. The complex is air-conditioned and pleasant, so you can have fun even on hot days, there is a varied food area, organized and free parking, a back-to-school fair with everything you need to start the year and a challenging ninja area for children and youth alongside the refreshing splash attraction for the summer (both for an additional fee).

LEGENDS will operate until August 31 at the meex Sharonim complex on Sundays-Thursdays between 10:00-19:00 and on Fridays between 10:00-14:30. (2 Harkon St., Hod Hasharon) and will offer summer entertainment that combines action, creativity, imagination and lots of energy - in one experience. 69 NIS for 7 attractions in one ticket.

Cellcom continues to strengthen its business sector operations: Sharon Ezra has been appointed CEO of Safeway.

TLV Mall is officially kicking off the summer season by bringing the Bricks Park assembly-block festival. Admission is free.

# Former FBI agent says Hamas network has survived Holy Land Foundation convictions

• By MATHILDA HELLER

Hamas support network in the US was left intact after the Holy Land Foundation trial, and is active today in the form of the Council on Arab and Islamic Relations (CAIR) and other groups, a retired FBI agent who led the Holy Land Foundation case told the Senate on Wednesday.

In a 2008 federal trial, the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) and five of its officials were convicted of providing material support to Hamas. The government revealed extensive evidence about the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and identified a decades-long conspiracy involving numerous individuals in the United States and abroad to support Hamas via front organizations in the United States.

Testifying in front of the Subcommittee on Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action, and Federal Rights, Lara Burns, who led the investigation between 2001 and 2008.

Burns spoke of the FBI lawfully wiretapping a meeting of the leaders of the Palestine Committee in 1993 in Philadelphia. During this, Burns said members of the Palestine Committee defined the scope of the conspiracy, which included supporting Hamas abroad and infiltrating universities, media, and politics here in the US with the intention of "normalizing Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood extremist ideology in American society."

"They also noted their intent to cleanse the curriculum in US-based schools because, quote, 'We don't want our children growing up surrendering to the idea of peace with Jews,'" she said.

FREE PALESTINE
END ALL U.S. AID TO ISRAEL!
NOW!

CAIR FLORIDA Executive Director Abdullah Jaber speaks to supporters for Palestinians in downtown Tampa during a march called International Day of Action for Gaza in Tampa, Florida, in 2023. (Octavio Jones/Getty Images)

Burns told the Senate that the leaders knew that Hamas would be designated a terror organization, and that they risked exposure, so they agreed to continue to pursue their agenda by "cloaking themselves under the cover of legitimacy."

HLF's role in the conspiracy before Hamas was designated as a terror front in 2001 was to send money to Gaza and the West Bank to support the Hamas social infrastructure, Burns testified. CAIR's role, she said, "was to defend and protect the other elements of the Hamas support network and to pressure others to adopt its narratives or remain quiet."

She also noted that the co-founder of CAIR, Nihad Awad, was an active participant in this conspiratorial meeting and remains the executive director of CAIR to date.

While the conspiracy of 1993 did not remain intact in its original sense, Burns told the Senate that elements within this network have evolved and rebranded and "CAIR's pressure tactics are still in play."

"CAIR and other elements of this network appear to have continued their acts in furtherance of the conspiratorial agenda as detailed extensively in my written testimony today. For decades, narratives have been intentionally seeded into public discourse that portray terrorist organizations as resistance movements, excuse acts of violence, and intimidate critics into silence.

"On college campuses, in activist spaces, and across social media, slogans and rhetoric that once existed on the fringes have become normalized. And too often people who raise concerns are immediately labeled hateful, intolerant, or extremist themselves."

"The First Amendment protects speech. It protects dissent. It protects protest. But it does not protect material support to terrorism. It does not protect criminal conspiracies."

Burns was then questioned by the Senate on whether some of the groups mentioned during the HLF prosecution as likely providing material support to terrorists are "still in existence today." She replied yes.

When asked whether she believes they are still actively members of the Muslim Brotherhood Network, she said she does. Burns also said she believes the conspiracy under which the Holyland Foundation was prosecuted is still in existence today.

She again referenced CAIR, noting that while it was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the HLF prosecution, it has never formally disavowed HLF. Both founders of CAIR were captured on the wiretap in 1993, and, as mentioned, Awad is still ED today.

Burns also wrote in her written testimony of two calls in 1999 by Omar Ahmad (the other CAIR founder) which demonstrated he "was directing expenditures of a Hamas fundraising organization."

Burns then testified that, while CAIR has told Congress it has no ties to Hamas, the documented record says otherwise and that if she were still an active FBI agent today, CAIR would be on her list of organizations warranting further investigation.

She also cited two other organizations as being part of this Muslim Brotherhood network: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), and American Muslims for Palestine (AMP).

She testified to the role of all three organizations – CAIR, AMP, SJP – "reframing the atrocities [of October 7] as legitimate resistance and/or, as acts of self-defense, consistent with senior Hamas leaders' messaging."

"CAIR and AMP have continued to co-sponsor and participate jointly in anti-Israel events wherein narratives are often twisted," and "CAIR has financially sponsored certain SJP members who violated campus codes of conduct, claiming the students were merely 'targeted for their pro-Palestinian advocacy,'" she said.

TAKEN TOGETHER, Burns said the recent activities of CAIR and the AMP "are consistent with the goals set forth by the original elements of this network in the 1993 Philadelphia Meeting and indicate the conspiracy is on-going."

"In the 1993 Philadelphia Meeting, this network in effect plotted to silence the free speech of those who disagreed with them via intimidation. The pressure tactics are still in play today. CAIR and other elements of this network appear to have continued their acts in furtherance of the conspiratorial agenda."

Burns said their conduct since October 7, 2023, further suggests that they have not withdrawn from the conspiracy.

She called on the FBI, the IRS, and the DOJ to instigate criminal investigations into the organizations referenced for violations of the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA), Violations of Section 2239B of Title 18 of the US Code, which criminalizes the provision of material support to a foreign terrorist organization, and tax Evasion/ Tax Fraud.

On a federal level, she called for enhanced transparency in reporting for 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organizations, with specific focus on requirements to identify foreign donors, as well as updated federal laws regarding the provision of material support to an FTO.

Burns also called on K-12 schools to report foreign funding and transparency.

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AN ILLUSTRATIVE image of a silhouette over the backdrop of the Hamas flag. (tanitost/Shutterstock)

# UK watchdog probes prominent Islamic aid charity over Hamas connections and funding

• By MATHILDA HELLER

The UK Charity Commission is investigating prominent Muslim-registered charity Al-Khair Foundation following reports of alleged Hamas connections, the ombudsman announced Friday.

Al-Khair was set up to advance religion, promote education, support social welfare, build religious harmony, and offer relief to victims of disasters.

However, last month, the Commission said it received a complaint alleging the charity and its partners had connections to Hamas, and had also funded Hamas.

The regulator immediately started examining the serious concerns raised and gathered more information to inform its assessment. The Commission has now escalated its engagement to a statutory inquiry.

This follows the arrest of Mohammad Yousef Hasna, an individual employed by Al-Khair Foundation, in the UK last week. Hasna was extradited to the US and charged with conspiring to provide material support to Hamas.

The Commission said it is considering all relevant information as part of its investigation, which will include verifying his connection to the charity and wider allegations made about it.

In the announcement, the US Department of Justice said Hasna provided financing and commodities to Hamas through what was identified as a Sham Charity.

However, *The Telegraph* obtained the indictment and found that "the Sham Charity" is referred to as Al-Khair throughout.

Additionally, in the FBI indictment, Al-Khair's gross income "nearly doubled following the October 7 Hamas Massacres," rising from £31.28 million to £74.79 million.

The charity recorded an income of over £74 million in the financial year ending July 31, 2025.

Due to concerns of possible serious risk to charitable funds, the UK Charity Commission has issued a legal order restricting certain financial transactions by the charity without the Commission's prior consent.

The investigation will seek to establish the nature and extent of the charity's links to Hasna, whether trustees have carried out appropriate checks and due diligence on international partners, and whether trustees are effectively monitoring the end use of funds internationally and have appropriate policies and procedures in place to protect funds from risk of misuse.

As charity regulator, the Commission cannot investigate criminal matters. If evidence of criminal activity is found, this will be referred to the police, which has the power to investigate.

Separately, Counter Terror Policing London confirmed investigations into the charity, with two search warrants on addresses in Croydon, South London.

Al-Khair Foundation said on Friday that it is cooperating fully with the statutory inquiry and taking the matter seriously.

"Everywhere we work, we are firmly committed to ensuring that the funds entrusted to us by our generous donors are used for their intended purpose: meeting the humanitarian needs of poor and marginalized people in the communities we serve," it said.

"In Gaza and around the world, we work hard to maintain robust governance, compliance, and oversight processes designed to help ensure that aid reaches its intended beneficiaries."

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# *DM Katz orders IDF probe into alleged mistreatment of wounded soldiers at Rambam hospital*

• By Jerusalem Post Staff and BATYA GILADI

Defense Minister Israel Katz called on Sunday morning for an IDF investigation into allegations levied on Saturday against Arab hospital employees accused of mistreating four soldiers at the Rambam Health Care Campus.

In a Saturday post on Instagram, David Chesterman, the brother of one of four soldiers wounded in Lebanon last week, alleged that the four soldiers' families were not allowed to see their wounded loved ones, and that the soldiers were waiting for ages to receive food and water.

The Israeli hospital stated that, following the conclusion of an internal investigation, it rejected all claims of wrongdoing towards the wounded soldiers by their staff.

"I view with the utmost seriousness the testimonies that have been published regarding the treatment of wounded IDF soldiers at the hospital," Katz said.

"The heroic IDF soldiers who were wounded while defending the State of Israel deserve the most dedicated and best possible care, as well as respectful treatment for themselves and their families," he added.

"I instructed the IDF to immediately and thoroughly investigate all the allegations raised with the hospital and the relevant authorities.

"If it is found that any staff member treated the wounded soldiers improperly or egregiously, it will not be allowed to pass without action. We will not allow anyone to treat IDF soldiers who were wounded defending the country in this manner.

"We will demand answers, draw conclusions, and act to ensure that such an incident does not happen again."

In response to Katz's demand, the Arab-Israeli Hadash party strongly condemned the defense minister, calling his statement on the allegations "a dangerous exploitation of the authority of the state and the military establishment for political and racist persecution."

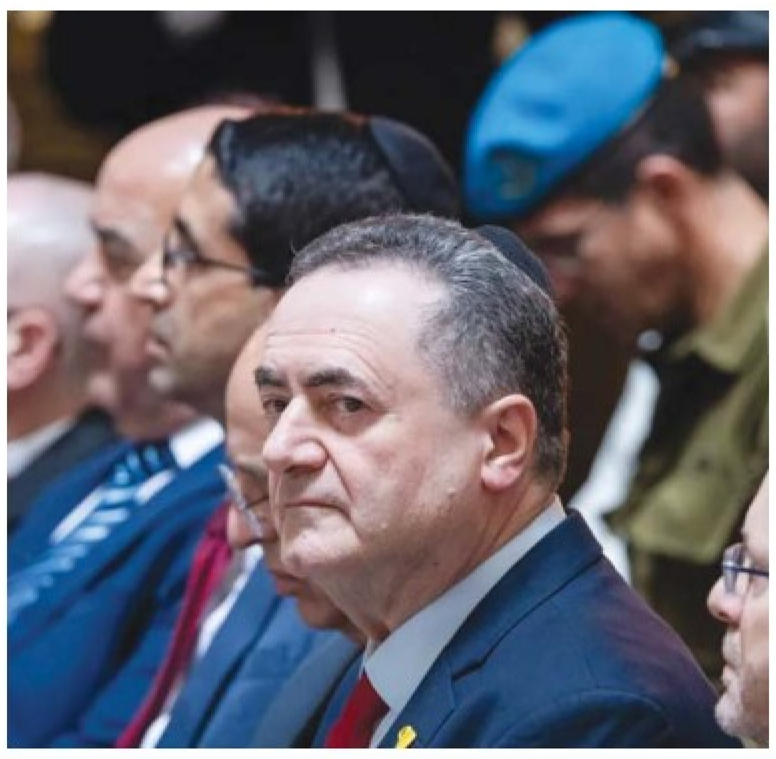
"These instructions come in the wake of a racist incitement campaign led by elements on the far Right, without any evidence or factual basis, and with the clear goal of intimidating the Arab doctors, nurses, and employees at the hospital, who provide professional and dedicated care to the entire public every day," Hadash stated.

Hadash called on human rights organizations and trade unions, both Arab and Jewish, to oppose Katz's "dangerous decision."

Jafar Farah, director of the Mossawa Center and the second-place candidate on Hadash's Knesset list, also reacted to Katz's statements, as well as those made by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

According to Farah, the two ministers "are trying to make political capital on the backs of the Arab medical teams who work 24 hours to treat the severely wounded without distinction."

Farah added that "The government ministers are the reason there aren't enough positions in the healthcare system."



DEFENSE MINISTER Israel Katz attends a state ceremony for fallen soldiers at Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem last year. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

In turn, Ben-Gvir also called for the Health Ministry to investigate whether the Rambam nurses were motivated by nationalistic sentiments.

"If the serious testimonies emerging from Rambam Hospital are accurate, this is a grave scandal that should concern every citizen in Israel. It is unthinkable that hospital employees would harass, humiliate, or abuse wounded soldiers and the families of soldiers who risk their lives for the security of Israel's citizens," Ben-Gvir wrote in a statement.

"These testimonies require an immediate, thorough investigation without any whitewashing, including an examination of whether, in some cases, the harassment was nationalistically motivated. Anyone who harms our soldiers and their families should know that there will be consequences," he added.

"I expect Rambam's management and the Health Ministry to investigate the matter thoroughly and take severe action if the allegations are found to be true."

In the Instagram post sent out on Saturday evening, Chesterman claimed that "my brother was seriously wounded in Lebanon, and what happened afterward is simply inconceivable.

"Three days ago, he was hospitalized together with three other fellow soldiers. He was sedated and ventilated, and only woke up yesterday afternoon, suffering from burns all over his body, pain, fever, and hallucinations," he wrote.

"At night, a new shift arrived on the ward, all of them Arabic speakers. They removed all the families from the wards and locked the doors.

"Four seriously wounded soldiers found themselves alone for an entire night, surrounded by an Arabic-speaking staff behind locked doors. It's completely insane."

### AS HOSTILITY TOWARD ISRAEL INCREASES

# Montenegro's tiny Jewish community treads warily

• By LARRY LUXNER/JTA

PODGORICA, Montenegro – At the entrance to Niksic, Montenegro's second-largest city, a vintage fighter jet painted in the colors of the Israel Air Force is perched on a giant pedestal, as if about to take flight.

The monument, unveiled in 2024, commemorates "Operation Velvetta" – a secret plan that deliverd 17 Spitfire aircraft from Czechoslovakia, via what was then Yugoslavia, to Israel in 1948. The brazen scheme, carried out under the noses of British and Soviet spies, helped the fledgling Jewish state achieve military superiority during its War of Independence.

At its base, a bronze plaque in Serbian, English and Hebrew calls the monument "a permanent reminder of the unbreakable friendship of Montenegro and Israel."

Yet lately, that friendship is being tested in ways not seen since Montenegro – the smallest of the six republics that once comprised Yugoslavia – declared independence in 2006.

"Yes, there's antisemitism here. It's much better than some other places, but the situation has changed," said Rabbi Ari Edelkopf, who heads the Religious Jewish Community of Montenegro in Podgorica, the capital.

"When I came here, I never believed we'd need 24-hour security. But since Oct. 7, we've had Free Gaza marches in all the major cities. My office is following every antisemitic portal here in Montenegro," he said, referring to websites that report local news. "We're paying a lawyer to monitor all this."

Several recent incidents involving Israeli visitors to this Connecticut-sized country of 625,000 have unnerved the local Jewish community, which numbers fewer than 1,000, even as the capital is on the verge of getting a major new Jewish cultural center set for completion this fall.

In the Adriatic beach resort of Budva, a recent violent brawl between local Montenegrins and some 20 Israeli tourists has triggered alarm among both local Jews and Israeli tourists.

It's still unclear who or what provoked the incident, which took place after midnight July 12 at a beach bar where the Israelis – 12 men and eight women – had been drinking. Edelkopf said he believed the incident had begun with a personal altercation but escalated when the locals realized the tourists they were sparring with were Israeli.

According to an Israeli government alert about the incident, the locals "shouted 'Free Palestine' and 'F*** Israel'" after learning about the origins of the tourists, who the alert said were not wearing indicators of their national or religious identity.

"Then they came back with a few friends and really beat the hell out of them," said Edelkopf, a Chabad rabbi who's originally from Los Angeles and who's lived in Montenegro for nine years.

"They put out cigarettes on their faces, and threw metal chairs and tables at them. It was horrible and very aggressive," he said. "Most of the Israelis were injured; one of them had a broken jaw."

The Israeli government assisted in helping the Israeli tourists expedite their flights out of Montenegro, though one member of the group remained in the country while hospitalized, according to Israel's National Center for Combating Antisemitism, an initiative of the Diaspora ministry. The ministry's alert said that police failed to intervene.

"I am waiting for the Montenegrin government to take action," Edelkopf told JTA from his Podgorica synagogue, which was previously a private house. "Until now, they have not offered any official response."

Despite the recent hostilities, the rabbi said, Montenegro has long welcomed Israeli tourists as well as residents. Jews have lived here for millennia before Yugoslavia existed.

Ruins dating from the 4th century CE indicate a flourishing Jewish community in Kotor, not far from Budva along the Adriatic. In fact, one of the country's most important religious sites is the presumed tomb of Shabbatai Zvi, located in nearby Ulcinj.

The 17th-century Jewish false messiah died shortly after his exile there in 1673 by the Ottoman Empire, which ruled much of the present-day Balkans.

While most Montenegrins are Eastern Orthodox Christians, about 20% are Muslims of either Bosnian or Albanian origin. In 1992, after communism collapsed and Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia broke away from the former Yugoslavia, the remaining two republics – Serbia and Montenegro – created the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In 2006, Montenegro declared independence following a referendum on the issue, and six years later, then-Prime Minister Igor Luksic granted Judaism recognition as the country's fourth official religion, alongside the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and Islam.

"The Jews are very well accepted here," said Nikolla Camaj, vice-president of Montenegro's parliament and one of five ethnic Albanians in the 81-member body.

"Officially we have very good relations with Israel, and people support the idea that Israel must be protected. But there's a problem because in Montenegro we have a lot of Muslims – Albanians and Bosniaks – and they don't like what's happening in Palestine."

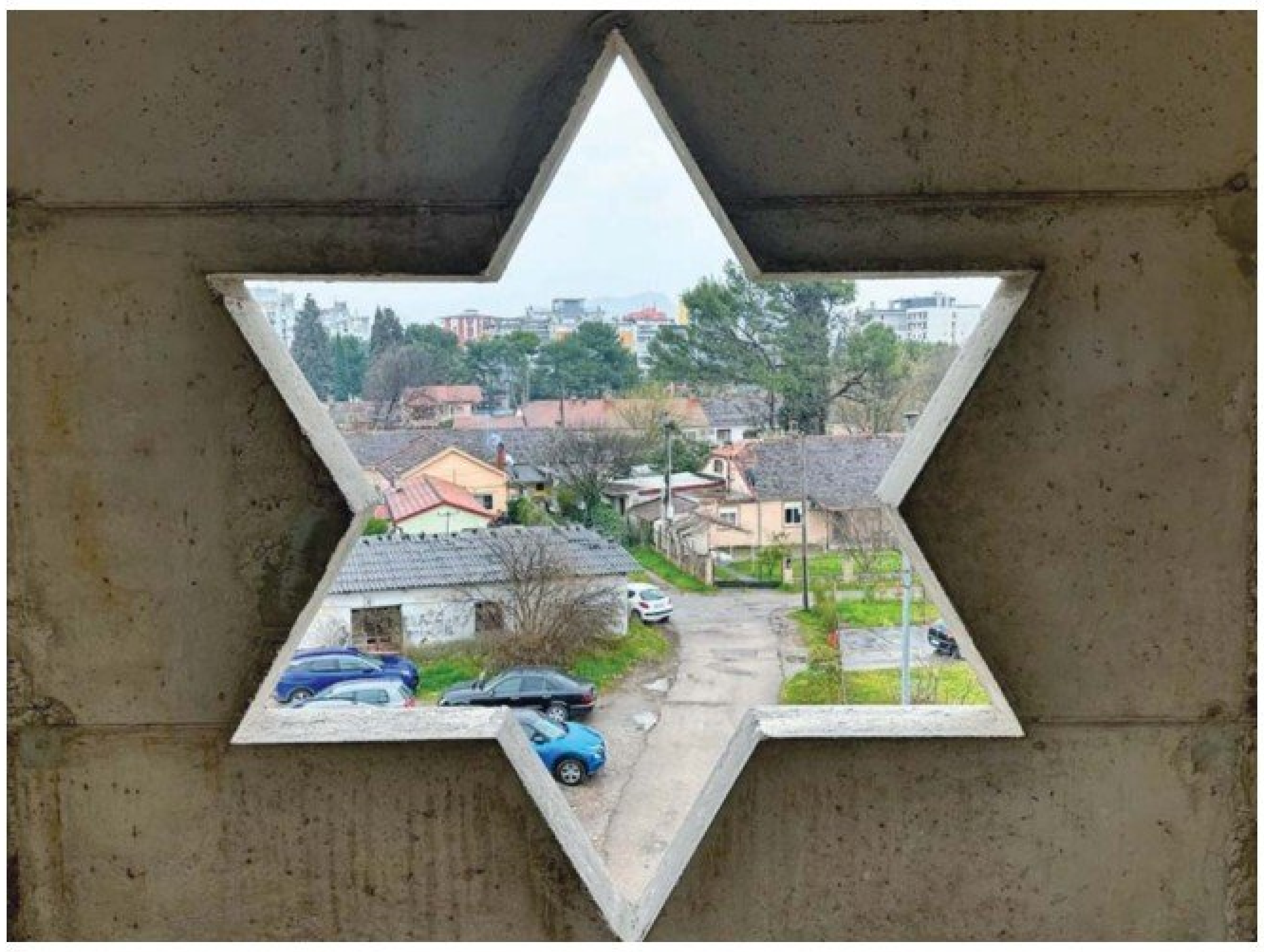
In Podgorica, a huge mural painted on an apartment building two blocks from the municipal bus terminal depicts Gazan refugee children, a slice of watermelon symbolizing the Palestinian resistance, and the declaration "Montenegro Stands With Palestine."

IN JULY, Israeli tourists visiting Plav – a resort town near Montenegro's borders with Kosovo and Albania – were harassed by a local couple, who called the visitors "baby killers."

That doesn't surprise Edelkopf at all.

"Local people are being fed articles translated from very strong anti-Israel news outlets," the rabbi said. "The main TV channels and online portals here are filled with lies and garbage against Israel, and the people have started to believe that Israel is committing genocide."

Even so, Israeli tourists keep coming. In 2025, according to official figures, 110,249 of them visited Montenegro – up from 73,513 the year before – most of them via direct flights from Tel Aviv. A Facebook group for Israelis planning trips to Montenegro has more than 80,000 members, who swap advice and share photos and tips from their trips.


A STAR OF DAVID forms part of the design of the Jewish Cultural Center under construction in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. (Larry Luxner)

Israel has no embassy in this country; instead, it's represented by Avivit Bar-Ilan, Israel's resident ambassador in Serbia, who could not be reached for comment.

Montenegro's few Jews are split between Edelkopf's traditional Orthodox Jewish synagogue and the local progressive Jewish congregation led by its president, Nina Ofner Bokan.

A computer science engineer, Ofner Bokan, 41, has represented her community since 2020. Last September, she was reelected unanimously for a five-year term. She's also senior advisor to the president of the Montenegrin parliament, and a vice-president of the World Jewish Congress.

"We feel very protected here, and we have an amazing relationship with all the other religious communities," Ofner Bokan said. "Over the years, we've made strong connections. ... Jews can walk with a kippah or a Star of David without any problem."

Last October, the community held its 12th annual Mahar conference in Budva, which featured speeches by several dignitaries including Deputy Prime Minister Budimir Aleksic.

"Montenegro is recognized as a country that cherishes diversity, fosters dialogue, and stands as a nation where the Holocaust did not occur and where antisemitism has never had – and will never have – any foundation," Aleksic assured his audience. "We are proud of that fact."

Ofner Bokan's Jewish congregation was founded in 2011, and she is its third president. In November 2024, she and other local Jews held a ceremony to mark the groundbreaking of the first purpose-built synagogue in Montenegrin history. Ar Ashem is slowly taking shape on a donated plot of land fronting Radosava Burica Street, she said, and will be finished in February.

With around 150 active members, the congregation's spiritual leader is Luciano Mose Prelevic, who, like Edelkopf, claims to be Montenegro's chief rabbi. The two communities have nothing to do with each other – and that hasn't changed even with a recent influx of Jews from warring Russia and Ukraine.

"Ours is the one that signed the contract in 2012 with the government recognizing the Jewish community," said Ofner Bokan, whose parents were from the Serbian city of Novi Sad. "But in public, Jews are not going to talk badly about each other. If we do, then what will other people think?"

Edelkopf, who with his wife Chana has eight children, spent 17 years in Russia running the Chabad outpost in Sochi. But he was deported in March 2017 after a Russian court determined that he was a "threat to national security" and came directly to Montenegro.

"We are officially the Religious Jewish Community of Montenegro," he said, while acknowledging deep divisions among the Jews of this relatively tiny country. "We do have things we need to improve, and we are not proud of that."

One relative newcomer is Tatiana Nirman, who is originally from St. Petersburg, Russia. Soon after the war with Ukraine broke out in February 2022, she moved to Montenegro and now directs cultural programming for the 150 or so Jews she estimates now live in Budva, the resort town where the brawl took place.

"We're here in Montenegro because it's a beautiful, comfortable country, and one of the few places we could come on a Russian passport," said Nirman, 40, who lives in the coastal town with her husband and two children. She adds that about 80% of her programs on art, music, Jewish history and cooking are in the Russian language.

Also living in Budva is Anna Davidi, 51, an Armenian-born Jew whose ancestors were from Iran. During the Nagorno-Karabakh War of the 1990s, Davidi's family moved to Ukraine, where she studied music in Khmelnytskyi.

She married a Jewish man from Breslov with whom she had a son and daughter, but later divorced and relocated to Montenegro after realizing there was little to keep her in Ukraine.

"What attracted me was Montenegro's exceptionally clean and beautiful nature, and the high level of tolerance among its people," said Davidi, who moved here in 2012.

"My brother, his wife and I came to Montenegro simply to explore it as a possible place to live. And almost from the moment we arrived, we fell in love."

A former fashion designer and restaurant owner with a degree in psychology, Davidi landed a job in real estate upon moving to Montenegro, and now represents an Israeli company involved in land sales. She said she sees both Montenegro and Israel, where she travels regularly to see her children and grandchildren, as important stops on her Jewish journey.

"When I look back, I see that my long road toward Israel has passed through several countries and generations: my ancestors came from Iran; I was born in Armenia; from there I moved to Ukraine; from there I moved to Montenegro," Davidi recalled.

"I hope that my next destination – perhaps the final station on this long journey – will be Jerusalem."

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# *Teen in group visiting Mauthausen wears 'Free Palestine' t-shirt causing altercation as other visitors protest*

• By ALEX CARSON

A visitor at the Mauthausen concentration camp memorial was condemned by other visitors for wearing a white t-shirt featuring a "Free Palestine" slogan and an illustration allegedly depicting Fatah terrorist Dalal Mughrabi.

Mughrabi helped orchestrate the 1978 Coastal Road massacre at Glilot, an attack that resulted in the deaths of 38 Israeli civilians, including 13 children. She and eight other terrorists were shot dead by security forces.

Footage circulating on social media captured the group walking up a staircase and through the memorial grounds. As the camera tracked a young man walking up the steps, the back of his white t-shirt allegedly displayed a graphic of Mughrabi in front of a Palestinian flag, with text reading "Free Palestine" on the front of the t-shirt.

The video then shifted to show an exchange between visitors and members of the youth group. An individual recording the interaction confronted the tour leader, asking, "Are you the leader of the group here?" When the group leader confirmed, the person recording asked, "Can we explain why 'Free Palestine' shirts are allowed to be shown at a concentration camp?"

The group leader responded that she had to work with the group, leading the questioner to press further, "You have to help us understand why it's... so we're respecting the dead and what happened here by also having political shirts?"

As the interaction continued, a member of the group held up her hand to block the camera, with one participant stating, "I'm asking you now not to film; he's under 18, it's not allowed."

The person recording countered, "This is the education that you're giving them? This is how you honor Holocaust victims? That's how you think it's ok to educate people?"

A VISITOR wearing a t-shirt featuring a 'Free Palestine' slogan is seen at the Mauthausen concentration camp. (Instagram/Screenshot)

As the confrontation continued, the person recording walked alongside the group and challenged another participant wearing a white t-shirt and black shorts. The person recording stated, "You are saying with your shirt that you are okay with the murder of Jews. You are." The participant in the white shirt responded: "No, it's not saying..."

The person recording pressed further and asked, "So what is he saying?" The participant replied, "He is saying it's not okay to murder Palestinian people."

The person recording responded, "That's what he's saying here? Really? You come here, and you call that a genocide while you're at a concentration camp? You call a war a genocide? You call fighting for the safety of your people to try to not have a genocide... you call that a genocide while you're in a concentration camp?"

As the group continued walking down the path toward the memorial exit, another participant wearing a blue floral top and black skirt turned around and engaged, while the person recording repeated, "You come here, and you call that a genocide while you're at a concentration camp? Do better! Your teachers have to do better! This is a f**king genocide here what you're learning about. Don't f***ing call other things a genocide. This is a genocide! Shame on you!"

In an official statement released regarding the controversy, the Mauthausen Memorial addressed the incident. "An incident occurred during a visit by around 600 participants from an international anti-fascist youth camp. One participant was wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "Free Palestine."

Our staff had not initially noticed this whilst supervising the large group. Nor was it initially possible to make sense of the vociferous reaction from one female visitor."

The museum administration further explained how staff intervened once the situation became clear, noting, "Once it became clear what the issue was, our staff reacted immediately. They tried to de-escalate the situation and, at the same time, called the police for assistance. However, the situation had already been brought under control by the time the police arrived."

The memorial also outlined its guiding principles for handling political expressions and provocations on site, stating that while it is a place of remembrance and historical-political education that welcomes all visitors with openness, staff prioritize de-escalation, open dialogue over hasty judgments, and safeguarding the dignity of the victims and the solemnity of the memorial grounds.

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# Toronto police arrest two pro-Palestinian activists for promoting hatred at protest

• By ALEX CARSON

The Toronto Police Service announced the arrests of two additional individuals in connection with a hate propaganda investigation stemming from a pro-Palestinian protest earlier this year.

Both suspects face charges of willful promotion of hatred and public incitement of hatred. The latest enforcement action brings the total number of people charged in the ongoing investigation to eight.

According to police, the investigation traces back to a weekly protest on March 15, when pro-Palestinian protesters and pro-Israel counter-protesters gathered at the intersection of Bathurst Street and Sheppard Avenue West.

Investigators allege that earlier, the accused individuals visited a storage locker to retrieve antisemitic signs.

Later that afternoon, they allegedly joined other protesters at the intersection, displaying the signs in full view of the public and a group of pro-Israel protesters situated across the street. Police stated that the individuals marched toward the Israel supporters while shouting derogatory slurs.

Members of the Hate Crime Unit executed a search warrant in Toronto, locating and arresting two suspects on Friday. Daniela Bonamico, 40, of Toronto, and Shahram Nayeb-Yazdi, 63, of Toronto, were each charged with wilful promotion of hatred and public incitement of hatred.

The arrests follow a series of charges previously announced by authorities. In April, Muhammad Anas Sial, 33, of Toronto, was charged with public incitement of hatred and wilful promotion of hatred. Subsequently, in June, Hosaam Hemdan, 19, Omer Turcan, 43, Yasaf Skaikh, 46, Hasan Aydin, 47, all of Toronto, and Syed Hussaini, 43, of Whitby, were arrested and faced identical charges, with Hemdan, Turcan, and Hussaini also receiving additional counts of disguise with intent.

Police noted that the suspects were scheduled to appear in court at the Toronto Regional Bail Centre on Saturday.

Following the March rally, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), B'nai Brith Canada, and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto condemned the rhetoric and sent a joint letter to Toronto Police Chief Myron Demkiw demanding immediate enforcement of Canada's hate propaganda laws.

CIJA released a statement on social media today saying "Following a March 15 hateful protest targeting Toronto's Jewish community – with propaganda and signs evoking the Nazi era – we joined @UJAFederation, @BnaiBrithCanada and thousands of Canadians in demanding that authorities take a tougher stand."

The advocacy group welcomed the update, stating: "We welcome the Toronto Police's announcement that two more extremists have been arrested and charged with wilful promotion of hatred and public incitement of hatred, bringing the total number charged to eight."

CIJA stressed that "There must be consequences for promoting hatred – whether at home or abroad. We call on Foreign Minister @AnitaAnandMP and Global Affairs Canada (@CanadaFP) to explain what steps are being taken to ensure that extremists, including hate-criminals, do not export their vitriol beyond Canada's borders."

CIJA urged government leaders and authorities to "hold criminals accountable. And our political leaders must ensure their words and actions do not embolden extremists who demonize Israel and contribute to an increasingly hostile environment for Jewish Canadians."

The latest police arrests come amid heightened tensions surrounding recurring protests at the Bathurst Street and Sheppard Avenue West intersection, coinciding with a surge of incidents targeting Jewish and Israeli institutions across Canada over the past month.

These include suspected antisemitic arson and shooting attacks targeting Jewish-owned Kiva's Bagel Bar locations in Toronto, the destruction of the kosher restaurant Noam in Montreal, and an incident involving an attempted knife attack at the Israel Pavilion kitchen tent during the Heritage Festival in Edmonton last Monday.

# Italian teenager arrested for ISIS association, holding antisemitic and neo-Nazi propaganda

• By MATHILDA HELLER

A 16-year-old Italian boy has been arrested for association with ISIS and for possessing "neo-Nazi and antisemitic content," Italian Police announced.

The teenager, from the province of Como, was arrested in Grosseto, where he was on vacation with his family, on charges of participation in an association with the aim of international terrorism, as well as propaganda and incitement to commit crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination.

The investigation was conducted by officers from the General Investigations and Special Operations Division anti-terrorism section in Milan (DIGOS), with the cooperation of the Como DIGOS and the Service for Combating Extremism and External Terrorism of the Central Directorate of the Prevention Police.

This was done in coordination with the Milan Juvenile Prosecutor's Office.

The investigation began following a report from AISI (the Internal Intelligence and Security Agency) concerning a user who disseminated jihadist propaganda material linked to the terrorist organization ISIS through several profiles on a messaging platform.

Further investigation enabled police to trace those profiles back to the boy, who had previously never been flagged for associations with radical circles.

This arrest therefore marks an unusual case of a minor with no previous extremist ties being detained for offenses related to international terrorism.

A subsequent personal and digital search by DIGOS revealed a large amount of material on Islamic State translated into different languages, propaganda videos, and images on training sessions, executions, and content of a supremacist, neo-Nazi, antisemitic nature.

They also found videos and conversations in which the teenager allegedly expressed his support for ISIS and stated that he had previously helped produce propaganda material for the terrorist organization.

A video in Russian was also found containing instructions on how to make an improvised explosive device using easily available materials.

"Another well-mannered and perfectly integrated 'Italian' boy of foreign origin," said Deputy PM Matteo Salvini. "Ready to build bombs in the name of Islamist terrorism..."

The police did not publicly mention the boy's ethnicity.

# Two years after murder of six Gaza hostages, protesters in Tel Aviv demand October 7 investigation

• By TZVI JASPER

The Women Demand Life movement protested in Tel Aviv on Sunday morning, demanding a commission of inquiry into the October 7 massacre.

The protest took place in recognition of the six hostages murdered by Hamas in August 2024: Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Eden Yerushalmi, Carmel Gat, Almog Sarusi, Alexander Lobanov, and Ori Danino.

Photos from the protest show the demonstrators holding cutouts of the hostages' faces, as well as a large banner reading "We won't forget, they could have returned alive."

In 2024, just after the bodies of the hostages were found, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum stated, "With deep sorrow, we once again announce the murder of six hostages. These six individuals were taken alive, endured the horrors of captivity, and were then coldly murdered."

"A deal for the return of the hostages has been on the table for over two months," the statement added. "Were it not for the delays, sabotage, and excuses, those whose deaths we learned about this morning would likely still be alive. It's time to bring our hostages home – the living for rehabilitation, and the fallen and murdered for burial in their homelands."

The forum called upon Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to bear responsibility in front of the nation after the IDF recovered the six bodies.

*Yonah Jeremy Bob, Sam Halpern, and Jerusalem Post Staff contributed to this report.*

## BOP

*Continued from Page 1*

acted forcefully in Lebanon, eliminating terrorists, including in the Ali al-Taher Ridge," Netanyahu said. He added that, although he could not elaborate further on the matter, he could say that Israel was conducting "very important activity."

Senior Hamas official Basem Naim told Reuters that the terror group expects mediators and the US to "press Netanyahu and his government to adhere to the roadmap."

Naim said that Hamas remains committed to the roadmap agreed with in Cairo.

Speaking on Iran, Netanyahu said that Iran was keeping from striking Israel because it "knows what a powerful blow we (Israel) will deal it if it does."

Netanyahu also expressed his appreciation for US President Donald Trump and the alliance between Israel and the US regarding keeping Iran from attaining nuclear weapons.

Earlier on Sunday, Army Radio reported that Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz quietly approved new development and reconstruction in the Gaza Strip two weeks ago.

According to Army Radio, the location marked for new construction is east of Rafah, within the Yellow Line, with the plan being to build new living spaces for Palestinians outside of Hamas's control.

Security sources said that the workers involved in the construction would be Gazan Palestinians, who are currently having their background checked by the Shin Bet (Israeli Security Agency).

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich commended Netanyahu's statements, saying he "welcomed the prime minister's unequivocal clarification."

"We went to war with one central objective: the destruction of Hamas militarily, civilly, and as a governing authority. That means there can be no Hamas in Gaza the day after, and Gaza must not pose a threat to Israeli citizens and residents of the South for many years to come. This roadmap runs 180 degrees contrary to that objective," Smotrich said.

Smotrich also stated that all reconstruction in Gaza would first require the complete disarmament of Hamas.

"The objective of the war to which we are committed is clear: a situation in which there is no Hamas in Gaza... we will not give up even a fraction of that objective," he said. •

## GAZA

*Continued from Page 1*

appear to be consistent with the framework's distinction between temporary infrastructure and permanent reconstruction.

All of this creates a notable gap between Israel's public messaging and the practical implementation of the framework on the ground. •

## PACT

*Continued from Page 1*

looking elsewhere.

That's a rational calculation, considering the pounding the Gulf states have taken from Iran and its proxies despite – and perhaps, at times, because of – the presence of US bases on their soil, paired with Washington's waffling over how to respond.

What is deeply disappointing from Israel's perspective is where Riyadh looked for its new partners. By joining up with Turkey and Pakistan, Saudi Arabia chose an architecture that fundamentally complicates Jerusalem's long-term regional strategy.

Pakistan is not a new security partner for the Saudis. The two countries have had close defense ties for decades, and signed another security pact last year. But those arrangements did little to shield Riyadh when it came under attack from either Iran or the Houthis.

There is also an internal logic to the Saudis seeking out fellow Sunni states to build a new security architecture. But it nevertheless shatters Jerusalem's hope that the recent upheaval in the Mideast would shuffle the deck in the region and lead to a clear-cut alliance between Israel and the pragmatic Sunni states.

The Saudis had different ideas. They wanted an alliance, but not with Israel. Hence the disappointment. But disappointment is not policy, and that explains the Netanyahu-Modi call.

This new trilateral alliance, though ostensibly a bulwark against Iran, is as much a concern for India – Pakistan's bitter enemy – as it is for Israel. The combination of Saudi money, Turkish defense manufacturing capabilities, and a nuclear-armed Pakistan is causing just as much alarm in New Delhi as it is in Jerusalem.

The strongest evidence that this deal dominated the Modi-Netanyahu phone call is what happened immediately afterward.

On August 7, Turkish and Pakistani media outlets published reports claiming that India had urgently approached Israel to sign a reciprocal bilateral defense pact to counter the new Saudi-Pakistan-Turkey axis. The rumors grew so intense that India's Ministry of External Affairs Fact Check unit issued an immediate statement dismissing reports of a new formal pact as "fake news."

Crucially, however, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal explicitly confirmed that New Delhi is "closely following the development" of the Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi deal.

That is an understatement. India has ample reason to be alarmed by any framework that enhances Pakistan's military position, especially given Turkey's history of supplying advanced drones and other military hardware to Islamabad.

FOR ISRAEL and India, moreover, the concerns are not only military; they are economic as well.

Saudi Arabia sits at the geographic center of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) – the grand, multi-billion-dollar transit network intended to bind India, the Gulf, and Haifa's port to Europe. Turkey was explicitly excluded from the original IMEC route and has actively promoted a rival transit project.

By drawing Saudi Arabia into a much closer strategic relationship, Ankara potentially gains a new avenue of influence over a country central to the very economic corridor India and Israel have spent years trying to promote.

The Mecca Pact also complicates the already difficult path toward Saudi-Israel normalization.

By binding itself more closely to Ankara and Islamabad – two capitals fiercely hostile to Jerusalem – Riyadh is entering a strategic framework whose other members would strongly oppose any Saudi move toward the Abraham Accords.

That does not give Turkey or Pakistan a formal veto over Saudi policy, but it raises the political and strategic price Riyadh would have to pay for normalization with Israel.

And it makes it even less likely that the Saudis will soften their insistence on movement toward Palestinian statehood as a prerequisite for normalization.

There is an irony here.

Some analysts thought the weakening of Iran would naturally lead to a strengthening of Israel's ties with the pragmatic Arab states. Instead, Iran's weakening – and Israel's demonstration of its own military reach – has apparently led some of those states to now fear Israeli dominance, and this alliance is one way to counter it.

But as *The Wall Street Journal* noted, when superpowers flail, regional powers make other arrangements. The Turks, Pakistanis, and Saudis are not the only wise men in town. Israel, too, will make other arrangements.

We have seen this script play out before.

When Israel's once-strategic relationship with Ankara collapsed following the 2003 rise to power of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Jerusalem was forced to readjust. And readjust it did, forging close security and energy ties with Turkey's historic rivals, Greece and Cyprus, and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria and Romania.

Those ties with Greece and Cyprus are also likely to get a boost from the Mecca Agreement. Athens and Nicosia are as concerned about an expanded Turkish footprint in the eastern Mediterranean as Jerusalem is.

And India, faced with a new framework that strengthens its archrival Pakistan and gives Turkey – already a close Pakistani ally – a larger regional role, has its own reasons to draw still closer to Israel.

That brings the story back to the seemingly out-of-the-blue Netanyahu-Modi phone call on Thursday.

It may have looked at the time like just another diplomatic conversation between two friendly leaders. In retrospect, it looks more like an early glimpse of the counter-alignments that the Mecca Pact may produce. •

## HORMUZ

*Continued from Page 1*

and sanctions on Iran, and freeing Iranian assets.

Ultimate decision-making in Iran rests with the Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since an airstrike killed his father and predecessor on February 28, the first day of US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran.

State media said on Sunday that President Masoud Pezeshkian had met Khamenei in late July and a paramilitary leader promised footage of the supreme leader, who was reportedly injured in the strike that killed his father, out in public.

The United Arab Emirates said on Saturday that Iran had attacked a ship affiliated to its state oil company.

There was no immediate comment from Iran, where the Revolutionary Guards have attacked ships in the past, saying they had not coordinated their passage through the strait with Iran.

Iranian strikes on Strait of Hormuz shipping have been coupled with increased attacks by its Yemen-based allies, the Houthis, who have targeted ships at another oil chokepoint on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

The Houthis also declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea last month in response to what they said was a Saudi siege on them in Yemen, an allegation denied by Riyadh, which backs Yemen's internationally recognized government.

THE GROUP said they had attacked Saudi Aramco's Jazan refinery on Sunday, two days after the kingdom signed a defense pact with Sunni Muslim allies Turkey and Pakistan in response to growing regional instability from the US-Israeli war on Shi'ite Iran.

The Saudi energy ministry said a fire had broken out at the refinery but was later extinguished with no injuries, and authorities were dealing with the incident, without giving a cause.

The Houthis used a drone to target the refinery, military spokesperson Yahya Saree posted on X/Twitter. They had struck Aramco sites before in Jazan, which processes 400,000 barrels of crude oil per day in southwestern Saudi Arabia.

It was not clear whether or how either Pakistan or Turkey would join in any Saudi response to the latest attack.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the new alliance was not directed against Iran or any other country, but rather served as a general pledge to support security.

The allies would decide through consultations what degree, form, and format of support they would ask for in the event of an attack, he said. •

ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWS in Gan Sacher, Jerusalem, yesterday. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

## JOINT

*Continued from Page 1*

The committee's proposal stated the order of who would be on the list, with the newly appointed Hadash chairman, Yousef Jabareen, first on the Joint List and Tibi in the second slot.

Jabareen replaced longtime party leader MK Ayman Odeh in leading the Hadash list after primaries were held in May.

The Hadash party stated that it welcomed the decision of the Reconciliation Committee and that, throughout the process of negotiations for the Joint List, "we made every effort to reach the broadest possible agreement, out of a commitment to respecting the public's wishes."

"Now, the responsibility lies with all of us to move forward without delay and prepare for the joint campaign, increase voter turnout among the Arab public, and ensure the strongest and broadest political representation possible," Hadash added.

Jabareen stated that only "a large and strong Joint List will work with all its might to send the Netanyahu/Ben-Gvir/Smotrich government home."

Jabareen told the *Post* last week that Hadash, Ta'al, and Balad had been negotiating the order of the reestablished Knesset slate, navigating "certain difficulties that arose over the parties' demands."

He also told the *Post* that the door would remain open for the fourth main Arab party, Ra'am, to join the three-party alliance until the deadline for parties to submit their Knesset lists, despite stalled negotiations with the party.

Even if negotiations between the three parties had not failed over the slate, Ra'am, led by MK Mansour Abbas, had not agreed to join the list.

His refusal had marked a setback in efforts to reunite all of the major Arab parties under a single electoral slate.

Currently, the two Arab-Israeli parties in the Knesset are Ra'am and Hadash-Ta'al. The latter is a reduced Joint List that agreed to run together in the 2022 election.

The Balad party, which is not in the Knesset, continues to fail to pass the electoral threshold in polls.

In past elections, the Arab parties had the greatest outcomes when running together, with a peak in success in the 2020 elections when the Joint List received 15 seats.

In 2021, the Ra'am party joined the coalition during the Naftali Bennett-Yair Lapid government, marking the first time an Arab party was a formal member of a governing coalition.

Though Ra'am seeks to be part of the coalition again, most opposition parties in the bloc seeking to replace Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have rejected the possibility of forming a government with any of the Arab parties.

Regarding the relations with Abbas, Jabareen also told the *Post* last week that there were currently no ongoing negotiations with Ra'am to join the three-party alliance.

The last major development for the four-party alliance was in January, when all the leaders, including Abbas, signed a commitment to work toward reestablishing the Joint List bloc.

Since the agreement was signed, Abbas had said he would form an alliance with the other Arab parties as a purely technical bloc, which could split up in the Knesset after the elections, opening the possibility for Ra'am to be part of a coalition again. •

## IMMIGRANT

*Continued from Page 1*

thanked the organization's founders and the aliyah and integration minister for decades of dedicated Zionist work.

The Douglas family had been planning the move for years. The turning point came last summer, when they visited Israel for a friend's wedding and realized they wanted their children to grow up and be educated in the country.

A few months later, they decided to immigrate to Israel.

All three of the family's children are named after fallen IDF soldiers and victims of terrorism, reflecting the family's strong emotional connection to the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

Atara and Jeffrey Douglas shared their feelings about the move.

"Someone once told us, 'We are leading, not leaving.' That sentence became our motto. We do not feel that we are leaving behind the life we knew, but rather, choosing to fulfill a dream and build our future and the future of our children in Israel."

Sofer noted the significance of the milestone.

"The 100,000th immigrant since the establishment of Nefesh B'Nefesh is an exciting and significant milestone for aliyah and for the State of Israel," he said. "This summer, we are privileged to see many families arriving in Israel with their children and choosing to build their home and their future here. We will continue working to encourage aliyah and provide immigrants with the support they need for the best possible integration."

Gelbart and Fass also reflected on the milestone.

"The 100,000th immigrant is much more than a number," the two said. "It symbolizes the tens of thousands of families who chose to tie their future to the future of the State of Israel. The children who immigrated with us in the early years have already established families here, serve in the IDF, and work in the healthcare, education, and economic sectors."

"That is exactly what we hoped for when we conceived the organization's vision."

NIS 15 billion: The estimated monetary contribution of immigration from North America to Israel's economy.

More than 65%: The proportion of immigrants who arrived with advanced academic degrees.

Approximately 6,000 doctors and professionals: Integrated into Israel's healthcare system.

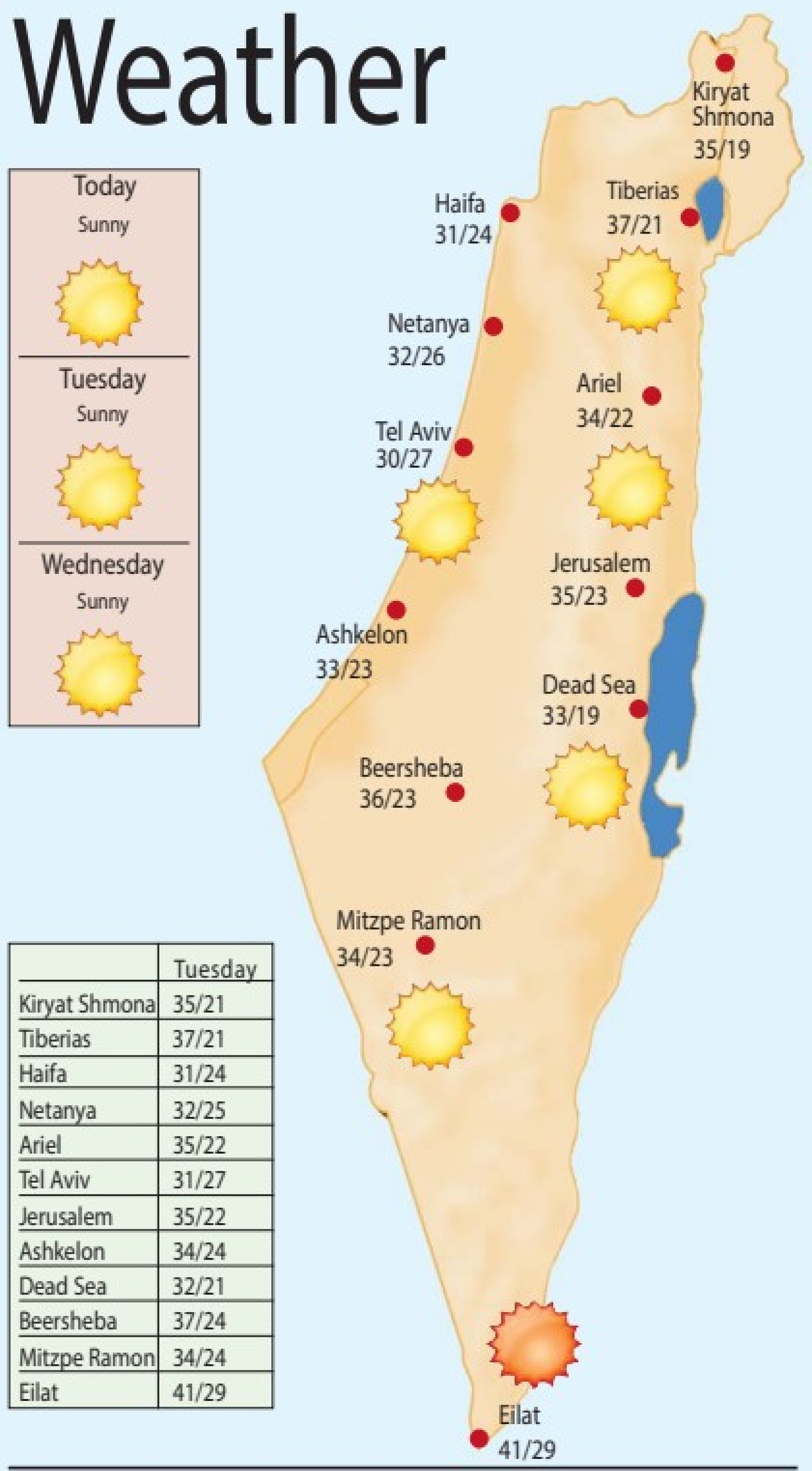
Approximately 14,000 immigrants: Chose to live in the Negev and Galilee as part of the "Go North" program in cooperation with KKL JNF.

More than 22,000 lone soldiers: Received guidance and support through the joint program with FIDF.

The retention rate of immigrants who have remained in Israel over the years: 90%. •

• Sports Editor: URIEL STURM
Comments/Questions: sports@jpost.com

## Weather



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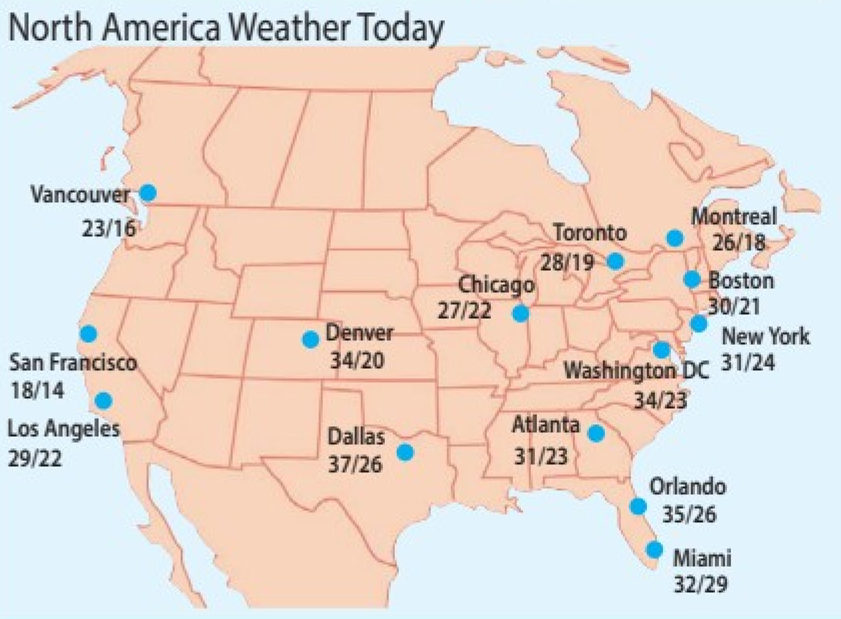
| Kiryat Shmona | 35/21 |
| Tiberias | 37/21 |
| Haifa | 31/24 |
| Netanya | 32/25 |
| Ariel | 35/22 |
| Tel Aviv | 31/27 |
| Jerusalem | 35/22 |
| Ashkelon | 34/24 |
| Dead Sea | 32/21 |
| Beersheba | 37/24 |
| Mitzpe Ramon | 34/24 |
| Eilat | 41/29 |

### North America Weather Today



## SPORTS SHORTS

### Champ Arsenal lands Newcastle's Guimaraes

LONDON (Reuters) – Arsenal has signed Newcastle United captain Bruno Guimaraes on a four-year contract with a further one-year option, the Premier League reigning champion announced early Sunday.

The North London club have agreed a deal reported by British media to be worth around 75 million pounds ($101.16 million) for the Brazil international, adding one of the Premier League's most influential midfielders to Mikel Arteta's squad.

The midfielder joined Newcastle from Olympique Lyonnais in January 2022 and quickly established himself as one of the league's standout performers, playing a central role in the north-east club's rise over the past three seasons.

He played for Brazil at this year's World Cup and has been a regular presence in the national team in recent years.

The move comes as another blow for Newcastle following the departures of key players Anthony Gordon and Sandro Tonali, as well as manager Eddie Howe, who stepped down from the role and was replaced by German coach Matthias Jaissle.

Guimaraes's arrival at The Emirates marks another significant statement of intent from Arsenal as the Gunners seek to retain their Premier League title and strengthen their challenge in Europe.

The 28-year-old has built a reputation as one of the league's most complete midfielders, combining defensive solidity with creativity and attacking output.

He made 195 appearances for Newcastle in all competitions, scoring 31 goals, and helped them end a long wait for domestic silverware by captaining the side to League Cup success in 2025.

The Brazilian's versatility could prove particularly valuable. Comfortable operating as a holding midfielder, Guimaraes would offer Arsenal greater tactical flexibility and control. He adds another elite option to Arteta's midfield alongside Declan Rice, Martin Zubimendi, Mikel Merino and captain Martin Odegaard.

While increasing competition for places, Guimaraes's signing will also help Arsenal to managed the workload of key players more effectively, particularly that of Rice, who was a cornerstone of the side that lifted its first league title in 22 years.

Arsenal begins the new campaign at home to promoted Coventry City on August 21.

### Dodgers edge D'backs to snap 7-game skid

Shohei Ohtani hit a two-out, infield single to drive in the winning run and the Los Angeles Dodgers broke a season-long seven-game losing streak with a 2-1, 10-inning victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Saturday in Phoenix.

Hunter Feduccia drew a two-out walk in the 10th off Gerardo Carrillo (2-1) and automatic runner Kyle Tucker took third when ball four was a wild pitch. Ohtani singled off Brandyn Garcia, the ball deflecting off sprawling first baseman Tim Tawa's glove as Tucker scored.

Jack Dreyer got Ryan Waldschmidt to ground into a double play with runners on first and third and one out in the bottom of the 10th for his first save. Waldschmidt beat the Dodgers with a two-run, walk-off homer in a 4-3 win Friday.

Geraldo Perdomo and Corbin Carroll hit back-to-back triples to open the ninth and tie the game at 1-1 off Edwin Diaz (2-1), but Diaz struck out Ildemaro Vargas with runners on second and third to end the inning.

Kyle Tucker's bases-empty homer in the eighth broke a scoreless tie after Arizona starter Brandon Pfaadt and Dodgers pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto threw near-matching gems. • Field Level Media

# Israel wraps up successful World Jiu-Jitsu Championships with multiple medals

• Jerusalem Post Sports Staff

Israel wrapped up a highly successful showing at the World Jiu-Jitsu Championships in Abu Dhabi over the weekend, with athletes earning medals and recording strong finishes across every age category, from the youth divisions through the senior ranks.

On the final day of competition, Nimrod Ryder added another medal to Israel's haul, winning bronze in the senior men's under-85 kilogram division. Ryder, a two-time gold medalist at the World Games and one of Israel's leading jiu-jitsu athletes, capped an impressive championship for the delegation with another podium finish.

The senior competition also saw Maya Bachar, 20, win a silver medal in her World Championships debut at the senior level.

Bachar reached the final, where she faced the reigning world champion from the United Arab Emirates in an extremely close bout that was decided only in the final seconds. The competitive final brought the Abu Dhabi crowd to its feet as the two athletes were applauded for their high level of performance.

Noga Reshef finished fifth in the women's under-63kg division, while Maya Dai placed fifth at under 52kg. Mark Lipetz, Omri Haviv and Miter Rosenfeld also finished fifth after losing their respective semifinal bouts in the under-56kg, under-62kg, under-69kg and under-77kg categories.

Israel's younger athletes also enjoyed considerable success throughout the championships.

ISRAELI JIU-JITSU medalists Nimrod Ryder (left) and Maya Bachar (right) celebrate their successful World Championships campaign in Abu Dhabi, where the delegation won medals across multiple age groups and weight categories. (Israel Jiu-Jitsu Association/Courtesy)

Noga Reshef and Lia Shale won gold medals in the Gi divisions, while Israel's cadet and junior athletes produced a series of impressive results in the No-Gi competition. Guy Torres was crowned world champion in the under-18 division, while Eden Gamliel and Shalev Shnir won silver medals and Tamir Naim took bronze.

Additional Israeli athletes recorded strong finishes throughout the championship, giving the delegation medals and high placements across the under-16, under-18, under-21 and senior categories.

Israeli Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Yossi Shelley followed the delegation during a significant portion of the championships, attending the competition, watching the Israeli athletes in action and encouraging both the competitors and coaching staff. Shelley also took part in the medal ceremonies, presenting Israeli athletes with their medals on the podium.

"This was a very successful World Championship for us, with achievements across all age groups and an important bronze medal for Nimrod in the senior competition," said Erez Elroy, president of the Israel Jiu-Jitsu Association. "Alongside the medal winners, we had many athletes who performed at a high level and came very close to reaching the podium. The results reflect the professional work, preparation and commitment of the athletes and coaching staff.

"I would like to thank the professional staff for their support throughout the championships, Eilat for its professional support and assistance, and Israeli Ambassador Yossi Shelley for his warm support of the national team."

Arik Kaplan, president and CEO of Ayelet, the umbrella organization for Israel's non-Olympic sports, also praised the delegation's performance.

"The Israeli national team demonstrated impressive depth in Abu Dhabi, from the next generation of athletes to the very top of the senior ranks," Kaplan said. "The medals, high finishes and Israeli presence on the podium are a tremendous source of pride. Congratulations to Nimrod and all the athletes in the delegation, and thank you to the association, coaches and everyone who works throughout the year to enable Israeli athletes to compete and succeed at the highest levels of world sport.

"Ayelet will continue to support and develop jiu-jitsu in Israel, a sport that brings Israeli pride around the world."

# Mixed results for Israeli clubs in European soccer qualifying

• By JOSHUA HALICKMAN

Three of Israel's representatives in the third round of European qualifying recorded mixed results over the weekend, with Hapoel Tel Aviv earning a valuable 2-0 win over Katowice, Beitar Jerusalem falling 2-1 to Austria Wien and Maccabi Tel Aviv suffering a 3-0 defeat to CSKA Sofia.

Hapoel Tel Aviv defeated Katowice 2-0 in the first leg of their UEFA Conference League third-round qualifying tie at Miskolc, Hungary, with goals from Stav Turiel and Roi Alkukin. Should Elyaniv Barda's side advance past the Polish club, it will face Italian Serie A powerhouse Atalanta in the playoff round for a place in the league phase.

Hapoel made the better start and took the lead in the 18th minute when Omri Altman found Turiel at the top of the box, with the forward finishing past Gabriel Kobylak. Emmanuel Boateng then won possession and set up Alkukin, who chipped the ball over the Katowice goalkeeper to make it 2-0.

The Reds continued to look for a third goal, with Alkukin and Daniel Dappa both coming close, but Katowice held firm as Hapoel settled for a two-goal advantage heading into the return leg.

"Given how the game developed, the players also felt that we could have won by more," Barda said. "Still, at the end of the day we played a very good game from a professional standpoint. The 2-0 result helps us advance to the next round, but it doesn't take us there yet."

Barda also praised the Hapoel supporters who traveled to Hungary.

"Kudos to all the fans who came out here to see us. It's unbelievable, they gave us a real home feeling and it has an incredible impact on the players."

Over in Romania, Beitar Jerusalem came up short against Austria Wien 2-1 in the first leg of their Conference League third-round qualifying tie.

Noam Muche gave Beitar an early lead, but Vasilije Markovic equalized just before halftime and Sanel Saljic scored the winner in the 70th minute.

The result leaves Almog Cohen's side needing a comeback in next week's return leg in Vienna. The winner of the tie will advance to the playoff round, where either Braga or Dinamo Minsk awaits.

Beitar created several early opportunities before Muche broke the deadlock in the 20th minute with a long-range effort. However, a poor clearance by Gil Cohen fell to Markovic, who finished from inside the area to make it 1-1 before the break.

Austria Wien came close to taking the lead early in the second half, but a missed opportunity and an offside goal kept the score level. Omer Atzily also came close for Beitar before Saljic finally put the hosts ahead.

Austria continued to threaten, but Miguel Silva made several important saves to keep Beitar within reach. Tomer Yosefi created opportunities after coming on, while Timoti Muzie also came close late on as Beitar searched for an equalizer.

"It's very disappointing. We came here to win the game," Cohen said. "Whenever you lose, even though it's only halftime in the tie and we still have another half to play in Vienna, you're disappointed.

"I knew for certain the match would be played at a very high tempo, and the burden of proof was on us, not on them. Against AEK Larnaca we wanted to play an aggressive, high-pressing game and against Austria Wien we knew they would play at a very high pace. The question was whether we would be able to match that tempo."

HAPOEL TEL AVIV players celebrate after the Reds earned a 2-0 first-leg victory over Katowice in Conference League qualifying. (Courtesy)

In Batumi, Maccabi Tel Aviv suffered the toughest result of the three Israeli clubs, falling 3-0 to CSKA Sofia in the first leg of their Europa League third-round qualifying tie.

Sofia took the lead in the ninth minute when Maks Ebong scored from inside the box past Ofek Melika. Leandro Godoy doubled the advantage with a volley 20 minutes later, sending the hosts into halftime with a 2-0 lead.

Kenny Miller made several changes during the second half in an effort to change the momentum, but CSKA Sofia added a third through Joel Zwarts to complete the victory.

Maccabi will travel to Bulgaria next week needing a major turnaround to reach the playoff round, where OFI Crete awaits. Should the yellow-and-blue fail to overturn the deficit, they would drop into the Conference League playoff round, where they would face either Lugano or Runavik.

"This tie is still far from over," Miller said. "But the goal we conceded at the end certainly makes the challenge more difficult. Here were some good things throughout the game, but there were also a lot of bad things.

"Once again, we didn't win our individual battles, which is the 'dirty' side of soccer, and we were too slow tracking back after giving the ball away cheaply. I felt we lost possession far too many times even when we weren't under any pressure, like on the third goal, which came from a simple forward pass and a counterattack. We were far too open in those moments and that's not something that characterized us at the start of the season."

Israel's fourth team in European qualifying, Hapoel Beersheba, will take a 1-0 lead into this week's second leg against Red Star Belgrade 1-0, with a tough road test on Wednesday.

Should Beersheba advance to the playoff round, it will face the winner of the Sabah vs Aarhus matchup, with a victory sending the Southern Reds to the Champions League league phase and a loss dropping them to the league phase of the Europa League.

*See more Israeli sports coverage at www.sportsrabbi.com/en*

# *Brees, Fitz headline Hall of Fame class*

• Field Level Media

Drew Brees overcame questions about his height, injury history and ability to become one of the best quarterbacks in NFL history.

The New Orleans Saints legend was acknowledged for his spectacular career when he highlighted this year's Pro Football Hall of Fame class, which also includes wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, linebacker Luke Kuechly, placekicker Adam Vinatieri and running back Roger Craig, which was forever immortalized in a ceremony on Saturday in Canton, Ohio.

Brees was benched not once or twice but three times during his career. The second-round draft pick by the San Diego Chargers found a second life with the Saints in 2006 and made the most of it, retiring at the time as the NFL's all-time passing yards leader (80,358) and leading New Orleans to the franchise's first Super Bowl title in 2009.

"The Who Dat Nation is real," Brees said of the large assembly of Saints fans that made the trip for his induction ceremony.

Although his yardage record was broken by Tom Brady in 2021, Brees still stands as No. 2 on the NFL's all-time leaderboard in passing yards and touchdowns (571).

He's just the fifth quarterback since 1980 to play 20 NFL seasons and made a perennial winner of a franchise without that track record of success. The Saints won double-digit games nine times in his 15 seasons and never won less than seven games while he was there.

Fitzgerald, a first-ballot Hall of Famer like Brees, reflected on his football journey which began as a ball boy for the Minnesota Vikings, which gave him an up-close view of now-fellow Hall of Fame wideouts Randy Moss and Cris Carter.

The No. 3 overall pick in the 2004 NFL Draft, Fitzgerald played his entire 17-year career for the Arizona Cardinals, making 11 Pro Bowl appearances and retiring behind only Jerry Rice on the NFL's all-time receiving yards list (17,492).

He praised former Cardinals quarterback and Hall of Famer Kurt Warner, citing that he "dragged me into the winner's circle." He also offered up an emotional message for his father, Larry Fitzgerald Sr., who passed away on June 1 at 71.

Kuechly became the second-youngest Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee at 35 years old and is the first inductee who played his entire career with the Carolina Panthers.

He retired after eight seasons in January 2020, in part because of concerns about his brain health after sustaining multiple concussions.

"There's no way to measure what the game of football has given to me, the joy it's provided, and the people that I've been so blessed to be around as a result of this game," Kuechly said.

Vinatieri, a four-time Super Bowl champion for the New England Patriots and Indianapolis Colts, delivered the funniest speech of the ceremony.

Amidst the jokes, however, the man who has made more NFL field goals (599) than anyone else over his 24-year career made it crystal clear how much it means to reach the "pinnacle of greatness" that is becoming just the third pure placekicker to be enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Craig, who played for the San Francisco 49ers, Los Angeles Raiders and Vikings from 1983-93, is the oldest member of the 2026 class at 66 years old.

The first player in NFL history to amass 1,000 rushing yards and 1,000 receiving yards in the same season – something just two players have done since – used a pre-recorded message at the ceremony to announce that he has been diagnosed with vascular dementia.

The belief is that concussions sustained during his career contributed to this diagnosis, and he hopes his story can be an example for the current and future generations of football players to take their brain health seriously.

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# Dangerous hedge

Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan signed a joint defense pact in Mecca on Friday that could alter the strategic balance of the Middle East.

Under the agreement, an armed attack on any of the three countries will be considered an attack on them all.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Saturday that the arrangement was technically equivalent to NATO's Article 5 collective-defense commitment.

As Reuters and the *Jerusalem Post* reported Saturday, with Eli Leon contributing, Fidan said the alliance would establish a ministerial committee and a general secretariat based in Saudi Arabia. Egypt could eventually join.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the agreement was based on "the principle of collective deterrence" and would expand security, defense, and counterterrorism cooperation.

Then came a statement Israel cannot ignore.

A day after the agreement was announced, Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Asif called for "a united military front" against Israel, describing it as a "threat to the entire Muslim world."

*The Post*'s Danielle Greyman-Kennard reported Sunday that Asif tied his call to the Palestinian issue and urged the Islamic world to stand together against Israel.

Dr. Yoel Guzansky, head of the Gulf Research Program at the Institute for National Security Studies, told Greyman-Kennard that the pact "doesn't shut the door completely" on Israel-Saudi Arabia normalization.

"Countries need stability. Saudis need stability," Guzansky said, describing Riyadh's approach succinctly: "This is hedging."

Former national security council head Jacob Nagel offered a similar explanation in an interview with 103FM reported by the *Post* on Friday.

He called the agreement "more of a diplomatic maneuver intended to put pressure on the American administration," arguing that Riyadh is looking for alternatives as it feels increasingly exposed.

That vulnerability has been building for years. Saudi Arabia has watched Iran and its proxies demonstrate their ability to strike across the region.

The 2019 attack on the kingdom's Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities exposed the limits of its defenses and raised questions in Riyadh about outside support in a crisis.

Israel should, therefore, take this Saudi hedge seriously.

Riyadh is searching for security, leverage, and strategic independence. The question for Israel and the United States is where that search eventually leads.

Turkey, under Erdogan, has adopted an increasingly hostile posture toward Israel. Pakistan has no diplomatic relations with Israel, and its defense minister is already invoking Muslim military unity against the Jewish state.

Saudi Arabia should understand the problem this creates. A defense partnership with countries whose senior leaders portray Israel as a regional enemy will inevitably cast a shadow over normalization.

Israeli leaders cannot treat the alliance as merely technical if one of its members is speaking about organizing the Muslim world militarily against Israel. Nevertheless, Jerusalem should keep the door to Riyadh wide open.

Israel's interest is to accelerate efforts to bring Saudi Arabia into an American-led regional security architecture that includes Israel and moderate Arab states.

The strategic promise of Saudi-Israel normalization extends beyond embassies, tourism, and trade.

It offers a durable regional alignment capable of confronting Iran, improving missile and air defense cooperation, protecting trade routes, and connecting Israel more deeply to the Arab world.

The Abraham Accords showed that relations with Israel can serve Arab states' economic and strategic interests. Saudi Arabia would bring significant political and economic weight to that regional framework.

That strategic objective has become even more urgent.

Washington should pay close attention to what happened in Mecca. A long-time US partner has sought additional security insurance from Ankara and nuclear-armed Islamabad. That is a warning about declining confidence in American guarantees.

The US should ask why one of its most important Arab partners feels it needs an alternative security structure, and how to prevent that structure from developing an explicitly anti-Israel character. Israel should speak clearly to Riyadh while continuing to pursue normalization.

Saudi Arabia can play a big role in building a more stable Middle East. Israel has every reason to bring it closer.

**INBAR ASHKENAZI**, *CEO Jerusalem Post Group*

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EDITORIAL OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION
The Jerusalem Post Building, PO Box 81, Jerusalem 9100002.
Telephone 02-531-5666, Fax 02-537-6553.
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# Ceuta is Africa's wake-up call

• By NACIMA CARINO

In the early hours of July 30, thousands of people began pouring across the border separating Morocco from the Spanish exclave of Ceuta. By the time Spanish authorities regained control days later, between 50,000 and 60,000 people had crossed, most of them Moroccan and many of them very young.

Dozens died as people drowned at sea or were caught in the chaos surrounding the crossings. Madrid deployed additional security forces to contain what quickly became one of the largest migration emergencies in the history of the enclave.

However, within hours, another story began spreading online. Instead of discussing why so many young Moroccans were willing to risk their lives to reach Europe, social media was filled with claims that Israel had somehow engineered the crisis because of tensions between Spain and Israel. Yet there is no evidence for such claims.

Moreover, they distract attention from the real issue. They encourage people to search for hidden plots rather than confront uncomfortable realities and often end up reinforcing antisemitic tropes about secret manipulation of world events. Indeed, the story of Ceuta began long before current tensions between Madrid and Jerusalem, and it will almost certainly continue long after them.

At the same time, there is also a separate debate about Ceuta and Melilla themselves. Moroccans often argue that the enclaves are remnants of a colonial past, while Spaniards maintain that they are and should remain Spanish territory. People can debate those questions endlessly. Nevertheless, for understanding this crisis, the argument is largely beside the point.

Whatever one's position on sovereignty, Ceuta and Melilla are today part of Spain and therefore part of the European Union. Consequently, the young people risking their lives were not doing so because they suddenly cared about territorial disputes. Rather, they were doing so because crossing that border represented entry into a world of greater opportunity, and that is the real story.

MIGRANTS SLEEP in a construction site amid recent mass crossings from Morocco into the Spanish territory of Ceuta, last week. (Violeta Santos Moura/Reuters)

Africa is by far the youngest continent on Earth, with a median age of about 19 years compared with more than 40 in Europe. For decades, economists have described this demographic reality as one of Africa's greatest advantages. Indeed, while Europe and East Asia struggle with aging populations, Africa is expected to provide the labor force, energy, and innovation that could power economic growth for generations.

Yet, the scenes in Ceuta tell a different story. A young population is only an advantage if young people believe they have a future where they are. Instead, in Ceuta in 2021, in Melilla in 2022, and again in Ceuta this summer, thousands of young Africans chose dangerous crossings over staying home; some swam through rough waters, others climbed fences, some risked death, and many knew they could be deported.

Consequently, the message behind those choices should concern every African government far more than any conspiracy theory circulating online.

MANY OF those who crossed did not know what job they would find in Europe, where they would live, or whether they would even be allowed to stay. Nevertheless, they were still willing to take the risk.

Europe continues to represent something powerful in the imagination of millions of young Africans; not necessarily wealth, but stability, functioning institutions, decent public services, and the belief that hard work can improve one's life. Whether that perception is entirely accurate is almost irrelevant. What matters, instead, is that, for many young Africans, it appears more convincing than the promises offered by their own countries.

Furthermore, the latest crisis is not an isolated event. In 2021, roughly 8,000 people crossed into Ceuta during a diplomatic confrontation between Morocco and Spain. In 2022, a mass attempt to enter Melilla ended in tragedy. This year's crisis was larger than either.

The immediate trigger may have been rumors spreading online after a Spanish Supreme Court ruling concerning migrants intercepted at sea. However, rumors alone do not cause tens of thousands of people to leave; they simply accelerate a desire that already exists.

Thus, the underlying reality remains remarkably consistent: Large numbers of young people struggle with unemployment, limited social mobility, and economic uncertainty. At the same time, migration remains intertwined with the delicate relationship between Morocco and Spain, particularly regarding the Sahara and the status of Ceuta and Melilla.

Consequently, for Spain, the crisis has once again exposed its dependence on Moroccan cooperation to manage Europe's only land border with Africa, making migration a recurring source of political leverage and diplomatic tension.

However, even that is ultimately a European debate. The African debate should be different. Africans should not be asking who is secretly behind the latest migration crisis. Instead, they should be asking why so many young Africans continue to believe that their future lies somewhere else.

No conspiracy theory can answer that question. After all, no foreign government created that sentiment, and no social media rumor can persuade tens of thousands of people to leave unless the desire to leave already exists.

Ultimately, that is the uncomfortable truth at the heart of Ceuta. Africa cannot simultaneously celebrate its youth as its greatest advantage while watching large numbers of that same youth risk their lives to leave. The real scandal is not that Europe continues to attract African youth. Rather, the real scandal is that so many African youths have lost confidence that their own countries can offer them a future worth staying for.

Therefore, if Africa's young generation is truly its greatest asset, success will not be measured by how many young Africans make it to Europe. Instead, it will be measured by how many choose to stay because they genuinely believe they can build dignified and meaningful lives at home. Until then, Ceuta will not be remembered as an exception. Rather, it will be remembered as another warning.

*The writer works for the Israel-Africa Institute.*

# Israel loses a friend in Congress

• By SHERWIN POMERANTZ

Israel lost one of its staunchest supporters in the US Congress with the passing this past week of Rep. Kay Granger at the age of 83.

She was a trailblazing Texas Republican who served as the first female mayor of Fort Worth and later spent 14 terms (28 years) in Congress.

Over those 28 years, she was in Congress during the Clinton, Bush, Obama, Biden, and both Trump administrations. She was also the first woman from her party to chair the powerful House Committee on Appropriations.

Earlier, as chair of the House Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee from 2011 to 2017, Granger controlled the allocation of funding for the US State Department and foreign aid.

In 2016, she took the lead on an Obama-initiated $38 billion, ten-year military aid package for Israel, which she successfully pushed through Congress. The package included 33 Lockheed Martin F-35 fighters, actually built in Granger's Texas district.

A former teacher and small-business owner, Granger served for four years as Fort Worth's mayor before being elected to Congress in 1996. After becoming the appropriations chairwoman in 2019, she wielded immense influence over federal spending.

She helped steer funds toward Fort Worth-based defense companies such as Lockheed Martin and the helicopter maker Bell Textron, many of which worked with Israeli defense contractors as well.

In 1996, while holding down the mayor's chair, she ran for an open seat in Congress in a longtime Democratic stronghold covering parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Though Granger had identified as a Republican to the United States Conference of Mayors, the Fort Worth mayoralty is nonpartisan.

Both the Democratic and Republican parties courted her to campaign as their candidate. She decided to run as a Republican and fended off conservative primary critics who called her too moderate.

Her victory with nearly 58 percent of the vote ended the district's century-long Democratic hold. She was the first Republican woman to represent a Texas district in the House and was reelected 13 times after her initial win.

REP. KAY GRANGER delivers a speech on Capitol Hill in 2006. (Larry Downing/Reuters)

In addition to spearheading the 2016 landmark $38b. military assistance agreement between the United States and Israel, she consistently advocated for full funding of Israel's security and defense needs through her role on the House Committee on Appropriations.

I MET Granger at the Texas State Capitol some 25 years ago, as she had evidenced an interest in having Texas establish a state foreign export and direct investment promotion office in Israel, something our company, Atid EDI Ltd., had been doing for other states as well.

We spoke at length about various aspects of such an office, how it could benefit the Texas economy, and why Israel was the best location in the Middle East for such a regional initiative.

While the idea did not garner the state's support at that time, I was moved by her obvious love and respect for Israel and what Israelis have accomplished here.

Although it is not clear how many times Granger visited Israel, documentation indicates she visited the country at least three times throughout her extensive career in public service.

Her first visit was in the early 1990s, during her tenure as the mayor of Fort Worth. She joined a delegation of municipal chief executives invited by legendary Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek.

Granger returned to Israel in 1998 as part of a high-profile congressional delegation led by then-House speaker Newt Gingrich to celebrate Israel's 50th anniversary.

Then, in 2009, as a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, she joined a congressional delegation that met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and senior defense and intelligence officials to discuss regional security.

Due to her long-running roles on the aforementioned House committees, she was frequently hosted by Israeli politicians on additional diplomatic and security missions.

AIPAC posted on X/Twitter, "We are saddened by the passing of Congresswoman Kay Granger, a trailblazer in public service and a steadfast friend of the US-Israel relationship."

It added that as part of her political career, Granger "championed life-saving security assistance to Israel for many years, ensuring that our ally had the resources it needed to defend its people. We extend our deepest condolences to her family, loved ones, and the Fort Worth community."

Regarding her devotion to her home city of Fort Worth, Eric Fox, a former Lockheed Martin Aeronautics senior director of government relations, posted in the Fort Worth Report, "If there is a Mount Rushmore of Fort Worth, Kay Granger is on it."

Israel, of course, needs all the friends it can get. So, thank you, Kay Granger, and we pray that your soul will occupy a high place in heaven above and that your memory will be blessed.

*The writer, a 42-year resident of Jerusalem, is a former national president of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, a past chairperson of the board of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, and a board member of the Israel-America Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM).*

# An evaluation of the pre-election political situation

### THINK ABOUT IT

• By SUSAN HATTIS ROLEF

ימין. גיוס. אחדות.

MK YULI EDELSTEIN (right) and former minister Gilad Erdan hold a press conference to announce the establishment of a new right-wing party under their leadership ahead of the upcoming general elections, last week, in Tel Aviv. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

I recall corresponding with a friend back in November 1959, toward the elections to the fourth Knesset. I was not yet of voting age, but my friend was, and what he wrote to me left a deep impression in my memory: "The elections will bring about no change: Mapai will win, and what was is what will be."

Indeed, David Ben-Gurion's Mapai received 47 Knesset seats, and Menachem Begin's Herut party – which came in second – received 17. One could describe the situation as rigid and predictable. It was to take another 18 years before the political "upheaval" finally shook our political system out of this stalemate – long after demographic and cultural changes had started raising emotions to dangerously high levels.

Today, our political situation is again stuck in a sort of rigidity, but one that is very different from 1959's. This rigidity once again encourages stalemate: a situation in which the most either side can hope for is a very marginal victory – nothing that promises real stability, with no party predicted to receive more than half of the number of seats Mapai had received in 1959. I hate to think what the demographic and cultural changes behind it all might eventually bring about.

This isn't a preordained situation, but rather is man-made. Every generation it has different causes. Today, it results from the fact that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is convinced that only his all-Right/religious coalition can ensure his political survival (which seems to be his be-all and end-all), while the rather fragile Right/Center/Left bloc facing him cooperates with this game with the "just not Bibi" slogan.

In the upcoming elections, only MK Benny Gantz (Blue and White) seeks to break this paradigm – but his chances of passing the 3.25% qualifying threshold are naught.

Until September 28, the final date that lists can register with the Central Elections Committee for participation in the elections, it is very difficult to predict the election results with any accuracy, since we do not know exactly which lists will be running.

At the moment, there are three Right/Center or right-wing groups that are considering running (Gilad Erdan/Yuli Edelstein, Yoaz Hendel/Chilli Troper, Benny Gantz/Dedi Simchi), all of which are hoping to attract former Likud voters who have not yet found a satisfactory alternative home (see below).

These groups appear to agree on the need to enlist haredim to military or national service, and disagree over which group they are unwilling to sit with in a future government. According to recent polls, none of them seems likely to pass the qualifying threshold, should they run on their own. They have about a month left to get their acts together.

We do not yet know how many Arab lists will participate in the elections, and whether one of them – Ra'am – will put former Yesh Atid MK Yoav Segalovitz in the second slot on its list as its potential candidate for National Security Minister. There are predictions that the Arab lists will garner 10-15 Knesset seats, which will greatly affect the election results.

Another unknown is whether a new haredi party – The Haredi Public, which seeks to integrate the haredi sector more closely into Israeli society, without breaking away from the haredi community – will finally decide to run independently.

The party was founded by the deputy mayor of Beit Shemesh Motti Leitner (who is Ashkenazi), and there are rumors that former Shas leader Eli Yishai (Sephardi) may join. Both Leitner and Yishai have served in the IDF.

WHILE THESE are some of the major unknowns that could affect the election results, there are several facts we do know.

Most opinion polls appear to agree that the current opposition parties running in the 26th Knesset elections will receive six to 10 seats more than will the current coalition parties. They also indicate that Likud is liable to lose around a third of the 32 seats that it received in the elections for the 25th Knesset. This suggests that around two-thirds of the Likud's 2022 voters have not been convinced by the events of the last four years to change course, and that for them, Netanyahu remains "the one and only."

In fact, events of the last four years did not raise any second thoughts among the majority of Likud voters. Inter alia, they included: attempts by the government to carry out a judicial revolution by legislative means; the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led massacre and Netanyahu's refusal to take responsibility for it, or set up a state commission of inquiry to investigate its causes; three years of a multi-front war, at an exorbitant cost, in which Israel won some impressive battles, but attained none of its declared goals.

Additionally, Likud voters seem unfazed by the government make-up, which has undermined Israel's liberal democratic and Zionist principles as proclaimed by Israel's Declaration of Independence; or by the serious malfunctions in which the current Prime Minister's Office and government operate; or the evidence regarding Netanyahu's faltering health and cognitive faculties.

It is said that Netanyahu is aware that in all likelihood, the Likud will not be called upon to form the next government. In an effort to make the Likud party list more attractive, there are last-minute efforts to manipulate its primaries (to be held next Monday), and a smear campaign against Yashar leader Gadi Eisenkot, who is Netanyahu's most serious rival for the premiership. It is said that Netanyahu is hoping for a deadlock, which would lead to another round of elections.

That is what happened after the elections to the 21st Knesset in April 2019, and again in the elections to the 22nd Knesset in September 2019. The result was Netanyahu heading Israel's 34th government and serving for five years, through Israel's 20th, 21st, 22nd, and the beginning of the 23rd Knesset.

Hopefully, this is not where we are heading, and that despite everything, a new, stable government will lead Israel back on track, while avoiding civil strife. We shall all be the wiser on October 28.

*The writer has written journalistic and academic articles, as well as several books, on international relations, Zionism, Israeli politics, and parliamentarism. From 1994 to 2010, she worked at the Knesset Library and the Knesset Research and Information Center.*

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# *Beyond coalition arithmetic*

• By DANIEL GOLDMAN

Relations with our Arab neighbors are shaped by more than a century of competing national claims, religious passions, and accumulated trauma. Anyone who pretends that simply sharing a strip of land between the river and the sea will, in itself, produce peaceful and fruitful coexistence has not been paying attention. Land does not reconcile people. People do, when they choose to.

And it cuts both ways. Arab Israelis are not a passive backdrop to our story. Just as we have responsibility toward them, they have agency over their own future. The choices their leaders make about violence, governance, religion, and citizenship are real choices, and the consequences are real consequences.

If we want Israel to thrive as Jewish and democratic, we have to take the question of living together with our Arab citizens seriously. One of Zionism's historic achievements is that two million Arabs are full citizens of the Jewish state. This should not be forgotten, understated, or taken for granted.

Some carry a fantasy that Israel could exist without any Arabs at all. I want to offer a different dream: a country that treats its Arab citizens as partners rather than as a problem to be managed. That is both a Zionist and Jewish mission. It is also a matter of crime, security, economics, and social solidarity.

To live here together, we need a vision. Not a tactic. Not coalition arithmetic. A vision.

Part of that vision is the patient, often unpopular work of building partnership with those who actually want it, politically, and where possible religiously. That is why I have spent recent months learning about Ra'am, the United Arab List, which has become the lightning rod for the entire question of whether Arab Israelis can be political partners, and to understand the opportunity this opens.

The story is more interesting than the slogans allow. The Southern Branch of the Israeli Islamic Movement, from which Ra'am emerged, was founded by Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, a man who in the 1980s went to prison for involvement in a militant Islamist underground.

What happened after he came out is the part that ought to be taught in Israeli and Palestinian schools. He renounced violent jihad, formulated a religious doctrine of *Wasatiyyah*, the Islamic "middle way," and ruled that Muslim citizens of Israel are religiously obligated to obey the laws of the state, to reject political and religious violence, and to seek the welfare of all who live in the land.

His successors have built a body of jurisprudential rulings – *fatawa* – that govern everything from organ transplantation to public health. This is not a movement waiting for its moment. It is a religious authority taking responsibility for the complexities of life inside an actual state.

DR. NESYA SHEMER of Bar-Ilan University, whose research examines the religious jurisprudence of the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement, has argued that its positions should be understood as a serious and internally developed Islamic legal tradition, rather than automatically dismissed as a tactical disguise for Muslim Brotherhood intentions (*taqiyya*).

Her research also challenges the assumption that every expression of moderation must be dismissed as taqiyya. If no behavior, no vote, no demand that one's own MK resign for denying Hamas's October 7 atrocities can ever count as evidence, then we are no longer engaged in analysis. We are engaged in conspiracy theory.

Mansour Abbas has done all of these things and enjoys substantial support within the Arab community. He has publicly recognized Israel as a Jewish state in both Hebrew and Arabic, not because of his identity as a Palestinian citizen of Israel but despite it.

In 2021, he visited an arson-destroyed synagogue in Lod and pledged to help rebuild it. He demanded the resignation of MK Iman Khatib-Yassin after her remarks denying the October 7 atrocities, telling the media that her words "negate our values and also the religion of Islam." All this in spite of strident opposition from other Arab Israeli factions. Beyond this, Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar called him a traitor.

That is not the resume of a sleeper agent.

Abbas himself has said he does not want to be the deciding vote – the 61st finger – in the next coalition. He understands the anxieties such a configuration would generate, and he is wise to defuse them.

But I want to suggest something deeper. Partnership with the forces of religious and political moderation in Arab Israeli society should not be the tactic of last resort when no Jewish coalition can be assembled. It should be what we seek, because the Abrahamic vocation of the Jewish people, articulated to our father Abraham himself, is to be a blessing to all the families of the world.

This is not naivety. The risks are real and the failures will be many. Abbas does not represent the entire Arab community, and Ra'am itself is complex, which demands us to proceed with caution and to insist on real accountability from potential partners.

But a Jewish state that cannot extend its hand to those Arabs who have extended theirs to us, to those who have paid for it in their own community, would be squandering a historic opportunity.

We should answer the offer. Honestly, carefully, and without illusions. But we should answer it with the politics of hope, not fear.

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# LETTERS

## The chickens have come home to roost

Maybe it's due to my years of teaching history that I often wish people would step back and consider the historical perspective of events before interpreting them in a panic. That is how I felt on reading Cookie Schwaeber-Issan's fearful interpretation of opposition to AIPAC's funding of pro-Israel candidates ("The public execution of the Israel lobby," August 9, 2026).

But I remember decades ago when AIPAC was first presented to the Jewish community, there was a rigorous debate among Jewish leaders regarding the advisability of creating an entity which might just add fuel to the antisemitic canard, perpetrated by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, that Jews wanted to rule the world through their money.

The proponents of AIPAC won out despite the fact that all forms of monied lobbying was under attack at the time in the US.

Now the "chickens have come to roost," as they say, at the worst possible time, and although totally unfair, as Schwaeber-Issan points out, it reminds us that Jews do best, in politics as in all areas of life, when they hold themselves to the highest standards.

*MARION REISS*
Beit Shemesh

## The main focus

Herb Keinon is quite correct ("The Michigan primary," August 7, 2026). The term "unelectable" has indeed lost much of its meaning, so the thresholds of, say, a decade ago are no longer relevant. Self-avowed socialists, then, would have been relegated to the political equivalent of Siberia. Today they're becoming the main focus of the Democratic Party.

Purple states such as Michigan can be tricky when it comes to polling and predictions, so what will ultimately happen in November is anybody's guess. I'll accept the opinion of Keinon and others that the outcome of the race between Abdul El-Sayed and Mike Rogers may very well be the determining factor of which party will control the Senate, although I suspect that may be something of an overstatement. What it comes down to is which of the two candidates is better for the citizens of Michigan; Israel and the dynamics of the middle east is a priority for no more than a handful of the voters.

Even trickier is accepting Keinon's argument of a silver lining embroidered into the cloud of El-Sayed's less than resounding victory in the recently-held primary. Yes, some middle-of-the-road Democrats will undoubtedly find unacceptable being represented in the Senate by someone guided by an extreme left perspective and will wind up casting their vote, albeit reluctantly, for the Republican candidate. But it will require an awful lot of discipline to make the transition from blue to red. For most of the voters in the Great Lakes State – both Jew and non-Jew – mean-mouthing Israel will not be enough of an incentive.

Keinon discretely avoided pointing out that El-Sayed's opponent in the primary, Haley Stevens, was very heavily supported by AIPAC. This will, I'm sure, be no small talking point during the upcoming campaign.

*BARRY NEWMAN*
Ginot Shomron

## A counterproductive shadow cabinet

Amotz Asa-El sanely suggests that the four members of the opposition hoping to become prime minister should, in the interest of unity, band together and support the one who has, in his opinion, the best chance of winning, namely Gadi Eisenkot ("Eisenkot unity," August 7, 2026). Surely, he must realize that the chances of this happening are no more than marginally better than zero. Still, he bravely went on and argued how the voters might very well be persuaded to go with Eisenkot by the presentation of a shadow cabinet. In other words, Asa-El is suggesting that six wagons be hitched, at the front, to a single horse.

Well, the parliamentary structure in places such as the United Kingdom, India, or Australia might support the use of a shadow cabinet and in fact find it to be an advantageous paradigm, but the readiness to do what's best for the country is not something Israel's political system can boast about. Eisenkot's competitors will not go silently into the night.

Asa-El may very likely be right that the former chief of staff will prove to be the opposition candidate most likely to usher in a new government. But Bennett, Liberman, and Golan are far from ready to accept that conclusively. A simple mistake is all it would take to upset the current metrics, and Eisenkot will have plenty of chances to make that happen. A shadow cabinet might very well be, for the current leader of the pack, counterproductive. It would hardly make any sense to introduce six experienced and ambitious ministers-in-waiting who would welcome the opportunity to move up notch. Eisenkot would be foolish to give them that opportunity.

*AMI SHIMON BEN-BARUCH*
Be'er Ya'acov

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# The Islamic Republic is exporting the costs of its economic failure

**• By SAEED GHASSEMINEJAD**

Naval enforcement has sharply constrained Tehran's seaborne oil trade. The blockade caused Iranian exports to collapse in May. They rebounded when enforcement was suspended in June and came under renewed pressure after restrictions were restored in July. Arab producers in the Persian Gulf continue to export, although regional crude and condensate shipments remained below prewar levels.

Tehran has already moved beyond maritime disruption. It has attacked refineries, gas facilities, export infrastructure, and tankers across the region. The next danger is a broader and more sustained campaign against infrastructure that allows neighboring states to bypass or mitigate disruption in the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf.

Tehran's regional aggression and its domestic economic crisis are not separate problems. Each reinforces the other. Military escalation and constrained oil revenue intensify inflation, fiscal pressure, and capital flight at home. At the same time, the regime has a growing incentive to impose comparable costs on neighboring energy exporters whose economies remain stronger.

The immediate cost of the regime's incompetence is visible in household prices. According to the Statistical Center of Iran, average inflation over the 12 months ending in Tir 1405 (July 2026) reached 66%. Point-to-point inflation stood at 87.9%. In other words, the same basket of goods and services cost nearly twice as much as it did one year earlier. Monthly inflation slowed from 5.9% in June to 3.1% in July. That offered little relief. Prices were still rising at a devastating pace.

The burden is also regressive. Average inflation for the second-lowest income decile reached 73.5%, compared with 63.9% for the wealthiest decile. That is a gap of 9.6 percentage points. Lower-income households are losing purchasing power faster, even though they have fewer financial buffers. The regime's planned further reductions in fuel subsidies will raise transportation and distribution costs, adding more pressure to household budgets.

The deeper warning appears in investment. Preliminary Central Bank estimates show that gross fixed capital formation fell by 11.9% in fiscal year 1404 (April 2025-March 2026). Investment in machinery dropped by 12.2%. Construction investment fell by 12.3%. Iran is investing far less in the equipment and structures needed to produce future output. This does not merely weaken current growth. It reduces the economy's future productive capacity and makes any recovery slower and more expensive.

The damage extends across the real economy. According to the Central Bank's preliminary national accounts, real GDP contracted by 0.7% in fiscal year 1404 (April 2025-March 2026).

Non-oil GDP fell by 1.1%. The broader industry and mining group contracted by 3.2%. Manufacturing declined by 3.4%, while construction plunged by 15.8%. Agriculture shrank by 4.2% as production of major crops – including wheat, barley, pistachios, and dates – declined. Even a 3.1% increase in oil-sector output could not offset the broader contraction.

External trade provides another warning. In real terms, exports of goods and services fell by 4.9% in fiscal year 1404. Imports contracted by 16.6%. Such severe import compression restricts access to machinery, intermediate goods, and essential inputs. It weakens current production and further reduces the economy's capacity to invest and grow.

THIS DETERIORATION is not the product of a single war, sanction, or business cycle. It is the cumulative result of the system imposed on Iran in 1979. For nearly five decades, the Islamic Republic has diverted national resources toward ideological expansion, proxy warfare, and regional confrontation.

Institutionalized corruption, chronic underinvestment, and isolation from the global economy have steadily weakened Iran's productive base. Sanctions accelerated the damage. The regime's own priorities created it.

The regime cannot reverse this decline without abandoning the policies that define it. Meaningful recovery requires fiscal discipline, secure property rights, sustained investment, access to global capital, and an end to regional aggression. The Islamic Republic cannot provide these conditions. Its political survival depends on the institutions and policies that are destroying Iran's economy.

Iranians understand that the crisis is not merely the product of incompetence. It reflects the regime's fundamental incapacity to govern in the national interest. Across repeated nationwide uprisings, citizens have risked imprisonment, torture, and death to demand a different future. Many have paid with their lives. Their struggle is not only against political repression. It is also against a system that has consumed Iran's prosperity and mortgaged its future.

Iran cannot recover under the Islamic Republic. Recovery requires its removal and replacement by a normal, national government. Such a government could protect property rights, attract foreign investment, rebuild infrastructure, and reconnect Iran to the global economy. The figures for fiscal year 1404 show that the cost of delay is rising rapidly.

This is where the interests of Iranians and many of Iran's neighbors converge. The Islamist regime in Tehran is an obstacle to their shared security and prosperity. The solution is clear: remove that obstacle. The path runs through supporting the Iranian people as they take back their country from the Islamic Republic.

The Arab states of the Persian Gulf cannot afford to wait passively. They should strengthen energy infrastructure, expand export routes that bypass the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, and deepen security cooperation with the United States and Israel. They should also use their influence in Washington to support the Iranian people and advance regime change – not another cycle of appeasement.

The short-term costs may be significant. However, they will be smaller than the long-term cost of allowing an increasingly aggressive Islamic Republic to destabilize the region.

*The writer is director of the Iran Prosperity Project. Follow him on X: @Sghasseminejad*

PROF. ZEEV SHOHAM, MD (Courtesy)

# AI in sperm selection

## *Changing the future of IVF*

**• By ZEEV SHOHAM**

IVF has become one of modern medicine's most advanced and emotionally significant fields. It combines sophisticated hormonal treatments, genetics, imaging, laboratory expertise and decades of clinical experience.

Yet at one of the most critical moments in the process, an important decision is still largely made by the human eye.

During ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection, the gold standard technique of IVF) an embryologist selects a single sperm cell and injects it directly into an egg. The choice is based mainly on what can be observed under the microscope.

Experienced embryologists are highly skilled, but the limitation is obvious: the human eye can only detect a fraction of the information contained in a sperm cell. The sperm cells are in constant movement, making the selection even more challenging,

This decision is crucial, as fertilization is not guaranteed. Typical fertilization rates following ICSI are often around 65–75%. When an egg fails to fertilize, there is no second chance for that egg. For most couples undergoing fertility treatments, IVF is an emotional (and physiological) roller coaster. For these couples every egg matters. every single fertilization can be the entire difference between a new family member to a failed IVF cycle.

### Replacing human variability with AI predictability

This is where artificial intelligence may have a meaningful role.

Israeli fertility technology company BetterFit is developing an AI-powered decision-support platform designed to assist embryologists during sperm selection. Rather than relying solely on visual assessment, the system uses advanced computer-vision models to analyze high-resolution images of individual sperm cells, in real time, and measure dozens of morphometric characteristics and features that are not visible to the human eye.

Within seconds, the platform provides an additional layer of information, in fact a recommendation, to support the embryologist's decision. The distinction is important: BetterFit is not trying to replace the embryologists. It empowers them, and helps turn a subjective visual judgment into measurable, consistent and data-driven decision.

In an initial proof-of-concept using clinical data from an IVF unit in Israel, the company reported fertilization-prediction accuracy of approximately 85-87%. These are early results and still require broader prospective and multicenter clinical validation, but they suggest that better sperm selection may improve one of the most fundamental steps in the IVF process.

### Why fertilization matters

The potential impact extends beyond fertilization itself: published clinical studies clearly correlated higher fertilization rates with higher accumulative live birth rates. More fertilized eggs lead to more embryos and more blastocysts available for transfer or freezing. That, in turn, could reduce the need for repeat egg-retrieval procedures, shorten time to pregnancy and improve the efficiency of IVF treatment.

The economic implications are also significant. IVF is expensive, particularly in markets such as the United States, and many patients require more than one cycle. Even modest improvements in efficiency can potentially reduce costs for patients while improving outcomes and economics for fertility clinics.

BetterFit also reflects an Israeli advantage that is often overlooked. Israel has an unusually strong fertility ecosystem, combined with expertise in medical devices, artificial intelligence and entrepreneurship.

One of the company's co-founders is Prof. Zeev Shoham, a veteran fertility specialist, former head of an IVF unit and professor of gynecology. He is also the founder of IVF-Worldwide, a global professional network that connects more than 100,000 fertility professionals, and has spent decades building relationships with leading physicians and opinion leaders in reproductive medicine.

The company is led by CEO Tsvi Bahat, a medical-technology executive with 25 years of experience in building and commercializing healthcare companies, including expansion into the US, European and Asian markets.

That combination matters. In healthcare, a strong algorithm is not enough. A technology must solve a real clinical problem, fit naturally into existing workflows, clear regulatory hurdles and demonstrate enough value for physicians and clinics to adopt it.

### A long term strategic vision

But perhaps BetterFit's most interesting opportunity is not only the immediate product.

Each IVF procedure generates valuable biological information, yet much of the data surrounding individual sperm cells disappears after fertilization. BetterFit's longer-term vision is to build a proprietary dataset linking high-resolution sperm images with downstream outcomes: fertilization, embryo development, pregnancy and eventually live birth.

Such a dataset could become a new intelligence layer in reproductive medicine.

Today, the question is relatively simple: which sperm is more likely to fertilize an egg?

Over time, answering that question at scale may unlock much broader insights.

The next major advance in IVF may not come from another expensive piece of laboratory equipment. It may come from learning how to extract information that has been sitting under the microscope all along.

*The writer is an IVF consultant, founder of IVF-Worldwide.com and co-editor of the* Textbook of Assisted Reproductive Techniques.

# The absence of a state comptroller

**• By OFER KENIG and ASSAF SHAPIRA**

Since the beginning of July, Israel has had no state comptroller – the role responsible for inspecting, reviewing, and auditing policies and operations of the state. This is a result of Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana's failure to take the necessary steps to implement a Supreme Court ruling ordering the Knesset to hold a repeat vote to elect the state comptroller, following misconduct that took place during the first votes.

Despite a clear and binding court order, the election process has not been completed, leaving the country's supreme audit institution without a head.

Beyond the highly improper decision, to put it mildly, to disregard a Supreme Court ruling, the situation is causing immediate harm, particularly in the midst of election season.

The state comptroller plays a critical role in elections, overseeing political parties in several different areas. After the elections, among other things, the comptroller issues reports on the parties' conduct during elections, in which they can determine that a party has failed to comply with the law and impose fines on it.

In real time, they issue directives on the management of party finances, provide parties with advisory opinions on routine matters, have the authority to determine that a donation to a party is prohibited, play a central role in determining the status of non-party actors active in elections, and more.

Even more pressing is the state comptroller's role in the processes by which parties select their candidates.

Primary season ahead of the election to the 26th Knesset is in full swing. Candidates are raising funds, hiring consultants and campaign managers, and racing from one parlor meeting to the next, all in an effort to win the confidence of their fellow party members and secure an electable slot on their party's Knesset list.

This year, however, these intraparty elections are taking place under unprecedented circumstances: without the state comptroller, the institution charged with overseeing the legality of campaign financing.

This is not a technical glitch or a minor problem. Intraparty competition, too, must be conducted according to clear and equal ground rules. The law, for example, limits the amount a candidate may raise in donations, sets an overall spending cap for each candidate's campaign, and imposes detailed reporting obligations.

The purpose of this framework is clear: to reduce the influence of money on politics, ensure equal opportunity among candidates, and strengthen public confidence in the democratic process.

The state comptroller also has broad authority to audit candidates' reports. For years, after every round of party primaries, the comptroller published detailed reports documenting irregularities, deficiencies, and violations of the law.

In many cases, substantial fines were imposed on candidates who exceeded spending caps, accepted prohibited donations, or failed to meet their reporting obligations. The very knowledge that their financial activity would be closely scrutinized served as an important deterrent and encouraged compliance with the rules.

This year, for the first time since the issue was regulated by law, that oversight mechanism is paralyzed.

In effect, the Knesset itself, which designated the state comptroller as the body responsible for overseeing primary campaign financing, is hollowing out the very provisions it enacted. The rules of the game remain in place, but the referee has disappeared from the field.

FORMER STATE comptroller Matanyahu Englman attends the Herzliya conference at the Reichman University in Herzliya, earlier this year. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

A candidate who scrupulously follows the law may therefore find themselves competing against a rival who chooses to flout the rules, assuming that the chances of being audited or penalized are lower than ever. That possibility alone is enough to undermine both public trust and the candidates' own confidence in the fairness of the process.

Beyond implications for the elections, there are other matters of state that are not being carried out in the absence of a state comptroller. No new state comptroller reports can be published, even those that have already been completed, and no examinations can be launched into new matters that were not planned in advance.

In addition, the state comptroller also serves by law as the ombudsman. Without a state comptroller, protective orders for whistleblowers cannot be issued. Public servants who seek to expose corruption are therefore left without legal protection and vulnerable to dismissal or retaliation.

Correcting this situation requires no legislation, public committees, or new oversight mechanisms. All that is required is to comply with the law and respect the High Court's ruling by completing the election of a state comptroller without delay and allowing the institution to resume carrying out its duties.

Particularly at a time when debate over the state of Israeli democracy is intensifying, the Israeli public ought to be deeply concerned by a situation in which one of the state's central oversight mechanisms has been rendered inoperative in the midst of party primaries and a general election campaign.

In a democracy, elected officials have a responsibility to obey court rulings, complete appointments required by law, and ensure institutions responsible for oversight and enforcement of the rules can do their job.

*Prof. Ofer Kenig is a researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute's Political Reform Program and a senior lecturer at Ashkelon Academic College.*

*Dr. Assaf Shapira is the head of the Israel Democracy Institute's Political Reform Program.*

# North Korea to send 50,000 troops to Russia – Zelensky

• By HEEJIN KIM

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said up to 50,000 North Korean soldiers will be deployed in Russia to fight for Pyongyang's ally, while calling on South Korea to provide support for its air defense.

Zelensky said on X/Twitter on Saturday that "a decision has been made for 30,000 to 50,000 North Koreans to be deployed on the territory of Russia," a higher figure than his estimate of 30,000 in July. He did not elaborate on how he obtained the information.

He said Kyiv had found some North Korean missiles in Ukraine's territory, without disclosing their locations.

"It is absolutely clear that North Korea will continue to build its experience in modern warfare, receive licenses from Russia, and receive all kinds of military tools from them," he said.

Urging Seoul to cooperate more closely with Kyiv, Zelensky said that Ukraine "would very much like to receive support from South Korea in an area where we have a shortage," referring to its air defense systems.

"We are ready to work on the Drone Deal and other areas as well," he said, adding that Ukrainian diplomats "are in contact" with Seoul to push potential deals.

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelensky attends a press conference with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (not pictured) during his visit to Belgrade on Saturday. (Marko Djurica/Reuters)

Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty during Putin's June 2024 visit to Pyongyang. The pact includes a mutual assistance provision if either country faces external aggression.

North Korea has cast its deployment as assistance to a treaty partner.

North Korea has sent an estimated 14,000 soldiers so far to Russia's Kursk Region in 2024, helping Moscow beat back a major incursion into the region by Ukrainian forces.

This month, an official at Ukraine's military intelligence told Reuters that a North Korean missile unit has begun deploying to western Russia and could be equipped with 120 ballistic missiles and six launchers for strikes against Ukraine.

Ukraine is very short of high-end air defenses, and Russia has tried to exploit this by using more ballistic missiles, which are particularly hard to shoot down.

North Korea has supplied Russia with millions of artillery and mortar rounds, ballistic missiles, long-range artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, according to Ukrainian and independent assessments.

The North Korean Embassy in Russia did not immediately respond to a request from Reuters for a comment.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry did not respond to a request from Reuters for a comment outside business hours.

(Reuters)

# Houthis strike Saudi refinery after it signs pact with Pakistan and Turkey

• Reuters

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said they had attacked Saudi Aramco's Jazan refinery on Sunday, two days after the kingdom signed a defense pact with Turkey and Pakistan in response to growing regional instability from the US-Israeli war on Iran.

With Iran and the United States still arguing over the parameters for peace, the Houthis declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea last month, citing what they said was a Saudi siege on them, an allegation Riyadh denies.

The Saudi energy ministry said a fire had broken out at the refinery but was later extinguished with no injuries and authorities were dealing with the incident, without giving a cause.

The Houthis used a drone to target the refinery, military spokesperson Yahya Saree posted on X. They had struck Aramco sites before in Jazan, which processes 400,000 barrels of crude oil per day in southwestern Saudi Arabia. They had also hit Yanbu on the Red Sea.

They also carried out missile and drone strikes on the Yemeni Red Sea port city of Mocha, Saree said in a separate statement. The historic port city is controlled by the Aden-based government, which is internationally recognized and backed by Riyadh.

### 'Jazan refinery shut last month'

Three Yemeni government sources told Reuters air defenses were engaging drones launched by the Houthis towards the commercial quay and storage in the port.

Saree said the Houthi strikes targeted Saudi troops and weapons arsenal in the area. There was no Saudi comment on the attacks in Yemen.

Iran and its allied Shi'ite Muslim armed groups have been firing on Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states and blockading their energy shipments since the US and Israel attacked it on February 28 in a major escalation after years of regional tumult.

Aramco chief executive Amin Nasser said last week that recent attacks on the company's facilities in the world's top oil exporter had caused some production interruptions but that he was confident operations could be restored quickly. He said the attacks had no material operational or financial impact.

The escalations, which disrupted global energy supplies and rattled the world's economy, prompted Saudi Arabia on Friday to form an alliance with Sunni Muslim US allies, Turkey and Pakistan.

The accord is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression and stipulates that an armed attack against any of the three would be regarded as an attack on all.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the new alliance was not directed against Iran or any other country, but rather served as a general pledge to support the three allies' security. It was not clear whether or how either Pakistan or Turkey would join in any Saudi response to the latest attacks.

Fidan said the allies would decide through consultations what degree, form, and format of support they would ask for in the event of an attack on any of them.

On July 27, Aramco shut the refinery in Jazan, which is near the border with Yemen, after an attack by Houthi militants damaged the plant's Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle complex and tank farm area, according to a note from consultancy IIR seen by Reuters.

The refinery also produces gasoline and ultra-light sulfur diesel.

A DRONE VIEW shows huge waves crashing on the coast of Huangqi, as Typhoon Dolphin approaches the town of Lianjiang, Fuzhou, Fujian province, China on Saturday. (cnsphoto via Reuters)

# Over a million evacuated as Typhoon Dolphin hits China's east coast

BEIJING (Reuters) – Typhoon Dolphin, the most powerful tropical cyclone to hit China this year, made landfall on the country's eastern coast on Sunday, bringing torrential rain and strong winds and triggering warnings of flooding and landslides.

The typhoon has already swept through Japan's southern Okinawa prefecture, injuring six people and cutting power to more than 50,000 buildings.

Typhoon Dolphin made landfall near Yuhuan in eastern Zhejiang province at about 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, China's meteorological authorities said.

The storm packed maximum sustained winds of 42 meters per second (151 kph) near its center at landfall, equivalent to a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

Authorities had moved offshore workers to safety, ordered vessels back to port and increased checks at reservoirs, mountain streams, landslide-prone areas, construction sites and tourist locations.

### Torrential rain and flood risk

Torrential rain is forecast through August 10 across Zhejiang, Shanghai, northern Fujian, northeastern Jiangxi, central and southern Anhui, and much of Jiangsu. Parts of central and eastern Zhejiang could receive 250-500 millimeters of rain, according to forecasters.

After landfall, Dolphin is forecast to track westward before slowing over central and southwestern China and gradually losing strength, Wang Haiping, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Centre, told state broadcaster CCTV.

That could prolong heavy rain and raise the risk of flooding and landslides, especially in mountainous areas and along smaller rivers.

Transport was widely disrupted across the east of the country, and more than one million people were evacuated from their homes.

In addition to evacuating at least 30,300 people, Shanghai has canceled about 1,500 flights, according to flight-tracking data provider VariFlight.

A 42-year-old tourist from Guangdong, surnamed Chen, said he was stranded in Shanghai after his family's flight, scheduled to depart on Sunday, was canceled because of Typhoon Dolphin.

He said the family had been rebooked on a flight at 10 p.m. on Monday, although they were unsure whether it would be able to take off.

"To us Guangdong people, this typhoon is as ordinary as having a meal and feeling the wind. It's just part of everyday life," Chen said, adding that the storm did not appear particularly strong by the standards of China's southern coast.

In neighboring Zhejiang province, the city of Wenzhou relocated more than 900,000 residents and opened more than 1,000 emergency shelters.

In Fujian province, authorities evacuated 98,900 people from high-risk areas after raising the typhoon emergency response to Level III, according to Xinhua. Zhejiang, Shanghai and Jiangsu have also activated Level III emergency responses.

Fujian maritime authorities said 55 ferry routes had been suspended, all 115 offshore construction projects halted and 290 construction vessels moved to sheltered waters.

The water resources ministry said the Qiantang, Yong, Jiao and Shuiyang rivers could see major flooding, while smaller rivers in the hardest-hit areas could rise above warning levels.

Authorities warned of a high risk of geological disasters in parts of Zhejiang, while residents in areas covered by a red mountain-torrent warning were told to follow local evacuation orders.

# 'Taiwan's defense spending for next year to rise by 16%'

TAIPEI (Reuters) – Taiwan's cabinet will propose a 16% annual rise in defense spending for 2027, which will for the first time exceed TWD 1 trillion, the official Central News Agency reported on Sunday, as Taipei bolsters its military.

The move will come as China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has ramped up military and political pressure over the past few years to assert its claims, which Taipei strongly rejects.

But Taiwan also faces calls from Washington to spend more on its own defense, mirroring pressure from the United States on Europe, something President Lai Ching-te has enthusiastically embraced.

The proposed budget of more than TWD 1.1 trillion, to be unveiled on August 20, includes funding for the coast guard, veterans and special projects, and will - like this year - exceed 3% of gross domestic product, the Central News Agency said.

Detailed figures await the final cabinet meeting, it added.

Taiwan's government has made military modernization a key policy platform and has repeatedly pledged to spend more on its defenses, including developing made-in-Taiwan submarines, given the rising threat from China.

China's military operates almost daily around Taiwan, and holds periodic war games, the last in late December.

China is also rapidly modernizing its armed forces, with new aircraft carriers, stealth fighter jets and missiles.

In March, China unveiled a rise of 7% in this year's defense spending, to 1.91 trillion yuan.

China refuses to talk to Lai, saying he is a "separatist." He says only Taiwan's people can decide their future.

Taiwan is currently in the middle of its annual Han Kuang military exercises.

Watching drills in the northern city of Taoyuan on Sunday, Lai said every exercise was an accumulation of experience giving the military greater confidence.

"Every bit of solid preparation in peacetime adds another measure of stability and strength for our nation," he said, in comments posted on his Facebook account.

On Taiwan's east coast on Sunday, the military also carried out a nuclear, biological and chemical decontamination drill, simulating a chemical weapons attack.

Soldiers, tanks and armored vehicles were decontaminated and disinfected in a drill aimed at testing the ability to respond quickly to such an event and get personnel and equipment back out to the front lines as soon as possible.

# *British Columbia declares state of emergency as more than 20,000 people flee due to wildfires*

• By PAIGE TAYLOR WHITE
and NIVEDITA BALU

PENTICTON, British Columbia (Reuters) – British Columbia (BC) declared a state of emergency on Saturday after thousands of people in the western Canadian province were ordered to flee a fast-moving wildfire that nearly doubled in size overnight.

The Bald Range wildfire was burning out of control and grew rapidly to about 9,500 hectares, prompting evacuation orders in Summerland, Peachland and other districts west of Okanagan Lake in the province's southern interior. The region produces most of BC's wine and is Canada's second-largest wine-producing area.

Premier David Eby told a news conference on Saturday that one fire official had likened the fire to "a bomb going off."

"He described flames on a 100-foot tree, flames going 200 feet above that, and the fire creating its own weather system, which creates lightning, which then feeds on itself," Eby said.

"Homes have been lost, and properties have been destroyed. Some people became trapped as conditions changed very quickly, and needed to be rescued," the premier said, adding it remained a very dynamic and threatening situation.

Summerland has a population of about 12,000 people, according to the 2021 census, and Peachland is home to about 6,500 residents.

A state of emergency grants the provincial government immediate access to special powers, including travel restrictions and supply protections to prevent price gouging, and specific tools to coordinate rescue work.

A FAIR WORKER looks up at a water bomber plane while it passes over Penticton as crews fight the nearby Bald Range wildfire in British Columbia on Saturday. (Paige Taylor White/Reuters)

Officials said the Bald Range wildfire triggered the largest evacuation event so far this summer and more than 20,000 people across B.C. have been forced to evacuate their homes.

"A lot of farms have been affected. We don't know how many structures have been lost. They're still busy fighting the fire," Summerland Mayor Doug Holmes said in a phone interview from Penticton. "We have to brace ourselves for the worst."

### Overnight evacuation

Many residents left overnight, driving south to Penticton or north to Kelowna before highways began to close.

Terry Fries of Summerland was watching a football game on Friday night when a neighbor advised him to get a bag ready as the fire grew.

"At the time, it was still farther back, and you could see it behind the hills," he said. When BC authorities issued the evacuation order around midnight, he and his family drove about 45 km. north to the city of Kelowna.

Residents recorded videos of fires by the highway and of structures burning as they evacuated. By Saturday afternoon, ashes began to settle on cars and houses in nearby areas as the fire painted the skies with orange hues.

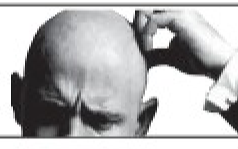
Summerland lost power on Saturday and issued a boil-water notice for residents. The municipality said untreated water had entered the system after it bypassed the water treatment plant due to the wildfire.

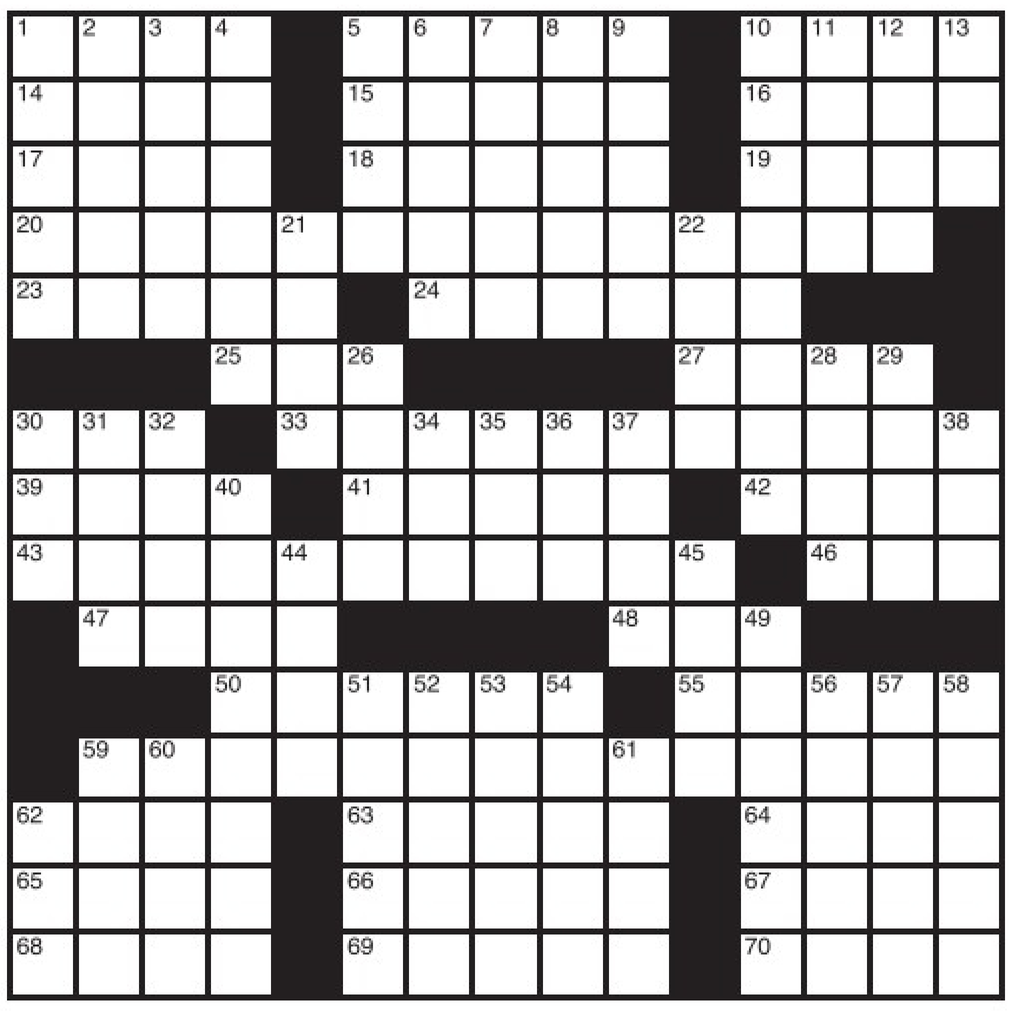
Several Canadian provinces, including Ontario and Quebec, have battled blazes this year as hot, dry weather fueled wildfires in dense forest areas. Firefighters from Mexico, Australia, France and New Zealand have helped combat the fires.

In BC, where hot and dry conditions have increased the risk of more fires spreading, about 1,500 firefighting personnel were battling more than 100 fires. The province has issued 40 evacuation orders and 49 alerts.

Fires have burned through 4 million hectares in Canada this year, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

# THE JERUSALEM POST DAILY BRAIN TEASERS





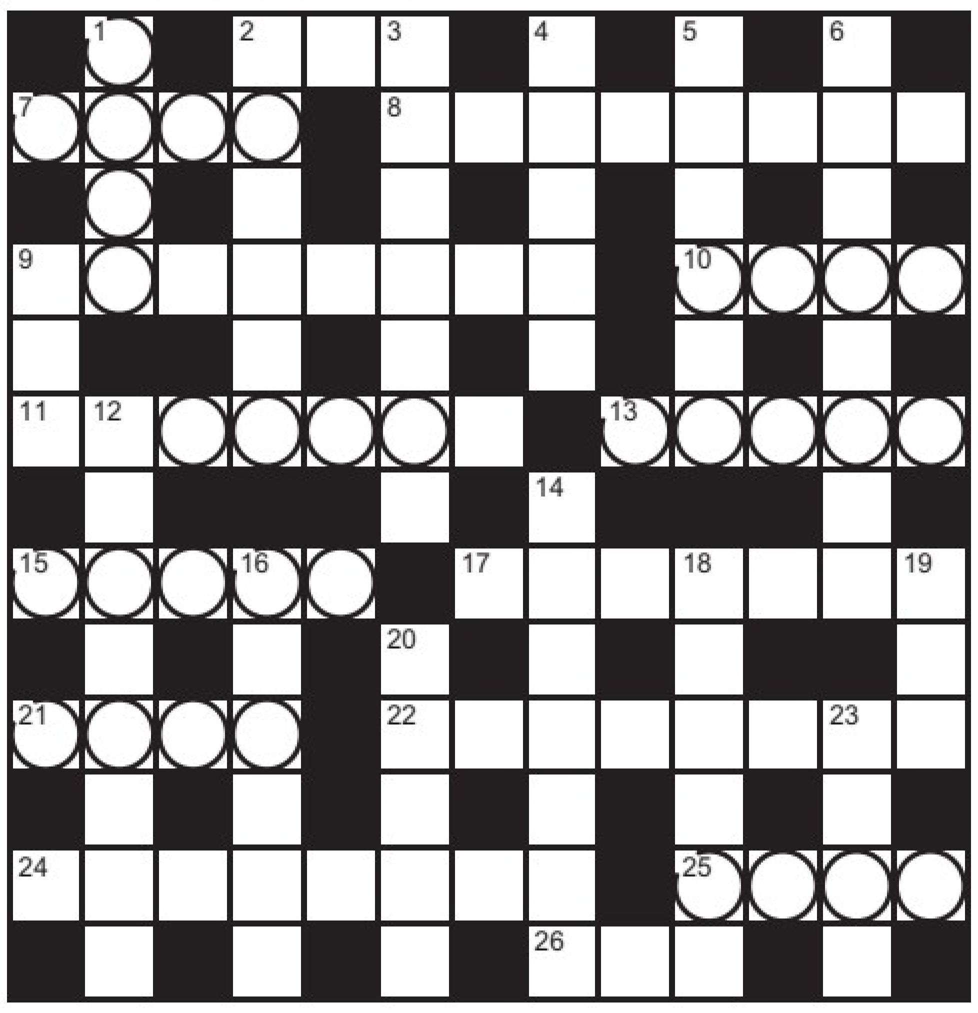
### ACROSS

1 Train for a boxing match
5 Love deeply
10 Follow directions
14 "Beloved" novelist Morrison
15 Kitchen gadget for apples
16 Locale
17 Bygone GM division
18 "Understood"
19 Prize grabber in an arcade game
20 Formal event attended in costume
23 Like a parent at graduation
24 "Man of Steel" director Zack
25 Geological span
27 Scissors sound
30 Wimbledon org.
33 Last film starring Daniel Craig as James Bond
39 Cardamominfused tea
41 Subscribe again
42 Turn down
43 Official record on a ship
46 Broke bread
47 Trace of smoke
48 Baby goat
50 Humiliated
55 Walkie-talkie, e.g.
59 Call for action, or what one might say before using the ends of 20-, 33-, & 43-Across
62 College admissions office offering
63 Garden pest
64 Hideout
65 Bilingual cartoon explorer
66 Kitchen gadget for flour
67 Poker buy-in
68 "Don't come any closer!"
69 Cuts (down)
70 Talk back to

### DOWN

1 Tread heavily
2 __ opposites
3 "Consequently ... "
4 Racy
5 Zoning unit
6 Opportunities, metaphorically
7 Church instrument with pipes
8 Like the sound of an oboe
9 Made a blunder
10 Nomination from the Academy
11 Bar tab, e.g.
12 List-shortening abbr.
13 Source of some flexible wood
21 Thick Japanese noodle
22 Breezy email sign-off
26 Sushi wrapper
28 Brainchild
29 Ice cream purchase
30 UNC's athletic gp.
31 Defrost
32 Big __: David Ortiz nickname
34 Perfect score in diving, or half a score
35 Connections
36 EGOT-winning Brooks
37 Furry "Star Wars" creature
38 Potato spot
40 "We've been duped!"
44 Emer. alerts
45 "You go, __!"
49 Texas city known as "Big D"
51 Audibly shocked
52 Vintage photo tone
53 Early anesthetic
54 Motivation
56 Taurasi who holds the WNBA record for career points
57 Monogram pts.
58 Fairy tale baddies
59 Stolen goods
60 Capital of France?
61 Poems of tribute
62 QB stats

## QUICK CROSSWORD



### Across

2 ___ Toledano (Israeli singer, runner-up in 1982 Eurovision) (3)
7 Letters and packages (4)
8 Stone Age relics (8)
9 Warning (IVY ROADS anagram) (8)
10 ___ office (SPOT anagram) (4)
11 Some peace agreements or Honda models (7)
13 It goes on (not in) an envelope (5)
15 Thick base of a former tree (5)
17 Seemingly magical; beyond what is expected or natural (7)
21 Proust novel "Remembrance of Things ___" (4)
22 Indebted (HEEL BOND anagram) (8)
24 Pathological thiamine deficiency (BRIBE IRE anagram) (8)
25 Tom, Dick or Harry, e.g. (4)
26 Get ahold of, as a suspect (3)

### Down

1 Picture post ___ (frequent tourist purchase) (4)
2 Animal or person lacking pigmentation (6)
3 What pioneers make (SAD IRON anagram) (7)
4 Major Japanese city (5)
5 Clinging mollusk (ELM TIP anagram) (6)
6 Bishop or knight, e.g. (8)
9 Sinatra's second (___ Gardner) (3)
12 Small vacation homes (8)
14 Free from fetters (7)
16 ___ system: Replaced inches, feet and yards (6)
18 Poise, unshaken nerve (MOB PAL anagram) (6)
19 ___ and yang (3)
20 "___ Road" (Beatles album title) (5)
23 First Lady of Song ___ Fitzgerald (4)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | R | O | M | A | | O | B | E | Y | | C | B | G | B |
| L | I | V | I | N | G | W | A | G | E | | O | R | E | E |
| F | A | I | R | Y | R | I | N | G | S | | M | E | A | T |
| A | N | D | | Q | U | E | E | N | | F | E | A | R | S |
| | | | T | U | B | S | | O | D | I | S | T | S | |
| R | E | T | I | E | S | | F | O | U | R | T | H | | |
| I | T | E | M | S | | D | O | D | G | E | O | M | N | I |
| G | R | E | E | T | | I | R | L | | C | R | I | E | D |
| S | E | N | T | I | E | N | C | E | | R | E | N | A | L |
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| | S | I | G | N | O | N | | P | A | C | T | | | |
| S | I | T | E | S | | G | O | A | S | K | | G | O | D |
| T | E | A | T | | I | C | A | N | S | E | E | W | H | Y |
| I | N | N | U | | M | A | R | K | E | R | G | E | N | E |
| R | A | S | P | | O | R | S | O | | S | O | N | O | S |

QUICK SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| U | | I | | G | | E | | N | | X | | R |
| D | I | S | P | U | T | E | | I | N | U | R | E |
| G | | E | | I | | S | | O | | R | | A |
| E | R | R | O | L | | O | M | N | I | B | U | S |
| | A | | | T | | N | | | | I | | O |
| B | Y | E | B | Y | E | | J | O | H | A | N | N |
| O | | S | | | | Z | | R | | | O | |
| U | N | Q | U | O | T | E | | C | O | U | R | T |
| N | | U | | V | | P | | H | | N | | O |
| C | R | I | M | E | | H | A | I | R | C | U | T |
| E | | R | | R | | Y | | D | | A | | A |
| R | E | E | N | T | E | R | S | | O | P | A | L |

### VERY EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4 | 1 | 8 | | 9 | 5 | |
| | | | 5 | | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| | 6 | | | 2 | | | | |
| 6 | | | 7 | | | 5 | | |
| 2 | | 9 | 4 | | 5 | 1 | | 8 |
| | | 3 | | | 6 | | | 7 |
| | | | | 7 | | | 4 | |
| 7 | 5 | 8 | 9 | | 3 | | | |
| | 3 | 6 | | 5 | 1 | 8 | | |

### EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | 7 | | | | 1 | | 5 |
| | | | 4 | | 2 | | | |
| 5 | | | | 3 | | | | 4 |
| | | 9 | 5 | | 6 | 2 | | |
| 8 | | 5 | | | | 7 | | 1 |
| | | 3 | 8 | | 7 | 4 | | |
| 9 | | | | 4 | | | | 7 |
| | | | 1 | | 5 | | | |
| 6 | | 4 | | | | 8 | | 2 |

### MEDIUM

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 | | 4 | | | | | |
| 1 | | 5 | | | | | 4 | |
| 8 | | | | 2 | | 5 | | |
| | 8 | | | | 1 | 9 | | |
| 6 | | 2 | 8 | | 9 | 1 | | 4 |
| | | 9 | 7 | | | | 8 | |
| | | 8 | | 5 | | | | 3 |
| | 7 | | | | | 4 | | 1 |
| | | | | | 7 | | 2 | |

### HARD

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 4 | | | | | | 3 | 1 |
| | | 9 | | 2 | | 5 | | |
| 1 | | | 2 | | 9 | | | 7 |
| | | 3 | 4 | | 6 | 8 | | |
| 8 | | | 3 | | 5 | | | 4 |
| | | 8 | | 9 | | 6 | | |
| 7 | 1 | | | | | | 5 | 8 |
| | | | | | | | | |

## 5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

6143

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | | T | | D |
| | L | | V | |
| O | | T | | C |
| | H | | C | |
| S | | L | | S |

PREVIOUS SOLUTION (other combinations may be possible)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | C | R | E | E |
| C | R | E | A | M |
| R | E | E | V | E |
| I | D | L | E | R |
| M | O | S | S | Y |

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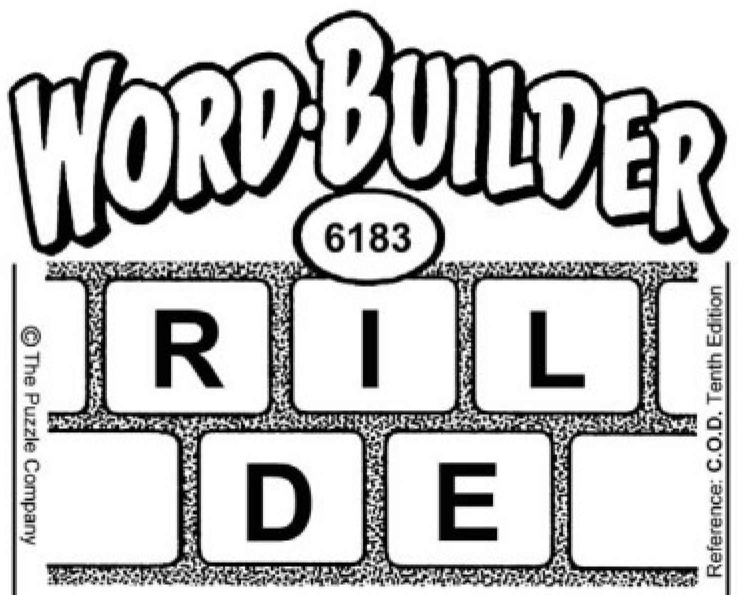
Reference: Concise Oxford 10th Edition

## WORD-BUILDER



How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

**TODAY'S GOALS:**
Good - **10** Excellent - **15** Amazing - **19**

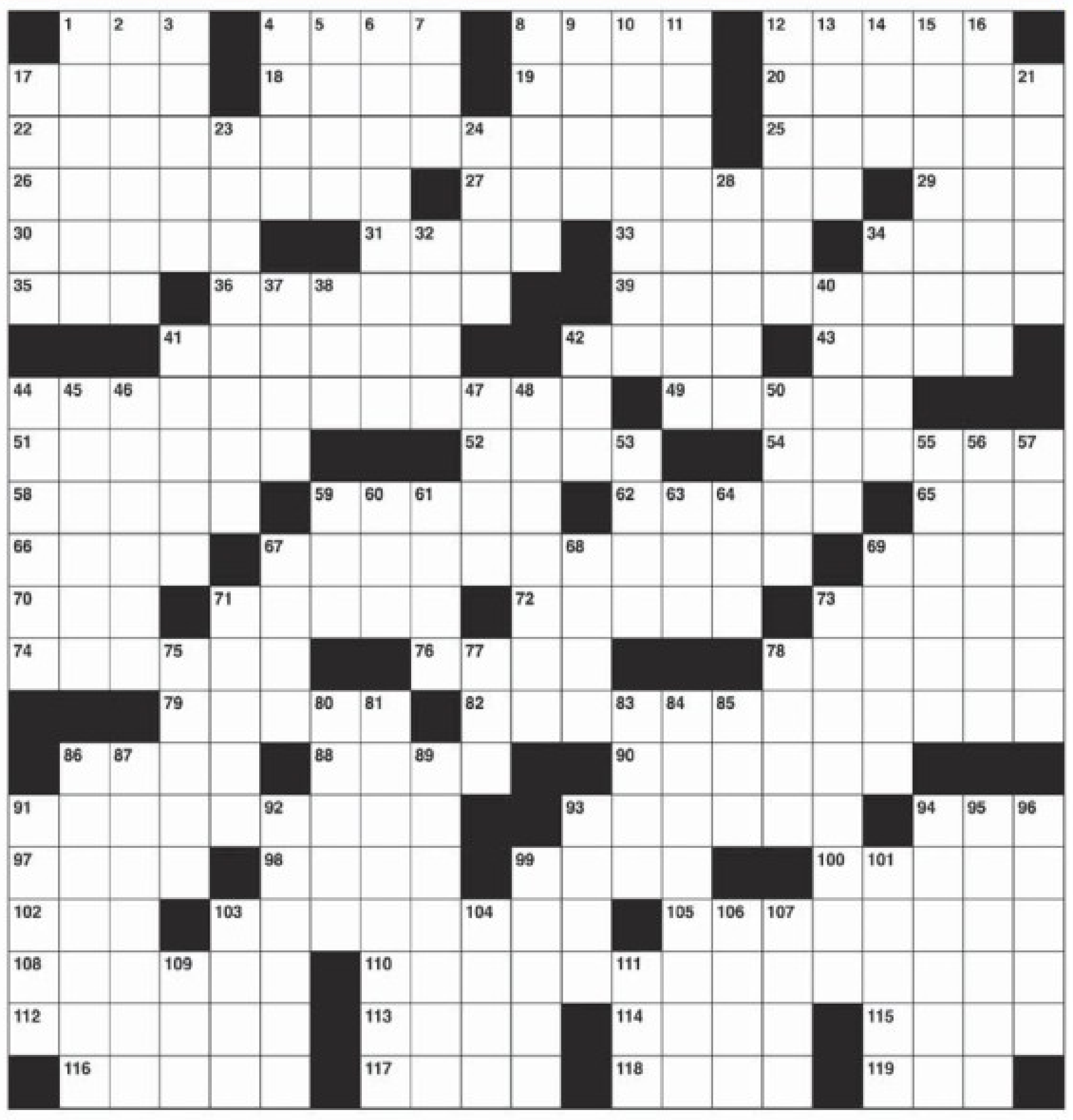
**SOLUTION 6182:** ale, aye, elf, fale, fay, fey, flay, flea, fly, lay, lea, leaf, leafy, ley, lye, yea.

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

No. 0809

### GOING FOR A SPIN
### BY RALPH SHARAGA AND DOUG PETERSON/ EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

*Ralph Sharaga*, of Belmont, Mass., is "a mostly retired comedy writer." New York Jets fans may know his name from the Jets podcast he and a couple of friends have been doing for 20 years. (He says that's "more frustrating than filling a tough grid.") This is Ralph's first crossword for The Times, which he made in collaboration with the Times veteran *Doug Peterson*, of Pasadena, Calif. Weirdly enough, Ralph is making his crossword debut in The Los Angeles Times today too. — *W.S.*



### ACROSS

**1** Pen name
**4** Garment whose name is a homophone for a board game
**8** Keywords accompanying a YouTube video, say
**12** Bellyaches
**17** Listing of what's on tap
**18** Story
**19** It's right around the present
**20** Phone notifications
**22** "*For our ad, how should we list the car that we found in the ditch?*"
**25** Massachusetts city named for a colonial patriot
**26** Like phone numbers in infomercials
**27** Team players
**29** Boggy place
**30** Rightmost word on the front of a penny
**31** Their horns don't honk
**33** Kerfuffles
**34** Moccasin decoration
**35** "Physics is like ___: Sure, it may give some practical results, but that's not why we do it" (quote attributed to Richard Feynman)
**36** Ankle part
**39** "*... and how do we add that it was just struck by lightning?*"
**41** "You will be ___"
**42** What's to be with Québec?
**43** Focus of many a small private college
**44** "*... and that the tailpipe is dragging on the ground?*"
**49** 19th-century school item
**51** Emulates Cicero
**52** Food or water
**54** Cover with a black rectangle, say
**58** Useful pointers?
**59** Rascal
**62** Tech models since 1998
**65** Country with the all-time greatest number of medals at the Winter Olympics: Abbr.
**66** Quickbeam and Leaflock, in fantasy
**67** "*... and what about the leaky roof?*"
**69** Point of intersection
**70** "Here ___!"
**71** Mideast language
**72** Surprising result
**73** Pretend
**74** Achilles, e.g.
**76** Family nickname comparable to the Yiddish "Bubbe"
**78** Smooth, now
**79** Gains prominence
**82** "*... and the broken door locks?*"
**86** "___ just in ... "
**88** Big name in plastic
**90** Rudimentary seeds
**91** "*... and the defective speaker system?*"
**93** Rudimentary
**94** Calling card, for short?
**97** Safari destinations?
**98** Drink in a red, white and blue cup
**99** Donahue on TV Guide's list of "50 Greatest TV Stars of All Time"
**100** Yemeni neighbor
**102** Old gridiron org. for the Boston Patriots
**103** End of "Our Town" or "A Doll's House"
**105** Spectacular flops
**108** Upholsterer's sample
**110** "*... and finally, the missing front tires?*"
**112** Capital of Zimbabwe
**113** Pupil's surroundings
**114** Like toms and drakes
**115** State as fact
**116** U-Haul alternative
**117** Legend who occasionally used his head to achieve greatness
**118** SoCal sch.
**119** Pink part of a Mr. Potato Head set

### DOWN

**1** Caption below the first of two photos
**2** Opposite of exodus
**3** Dumbbell exercises
**4** Giant or dwarf
**5** ___-de-camp
**6** Backs out, say
**7** Indignation
**8** Ninnies
**9** What someone flat-footed lacks
**10** Like an honorable knight
**11** They might be on one's radar
**12** Pet
**13** Porters, for example
**14** Race prior to a race?
**15** Fifth-year student leader at Hogwarts
**16** Barely runs?
**17** Fruit snack brand
**21** Excites
**23** Again and again, in verse
**24** Over-the-top performers
**28** Item on a rack
**32** Mercedes alternative
**34** Idly doodling, maybe
**37** How the car in this puzzle's theme would be sold
**38** Blog feed letters
**40** Disrelishes and then some
**41** Hands (out)
**42** Linguistic suffix
**44** "Fabulous!"
**45** It has a rind but supposedly no rhyme
**46** Deliberately malicious
**47** Opposite of "You'll pay for that!"?
**48** God who aids the Trojan fleet in the first book of the "Aeneid"
**50** Long stories have them
**53** Runs out of gas
**55** Divinely elect
**56** Old yeller?
**57** Faddish
**59** California's Big ___
**60** Keeps in the loop, electronically
**61** Similar (to)
**63** Pioneering astronaut Jemison
**64** "The Good Wife" figure: Abbr.
**67** Declares off limits
**68** Fix a litter problem?
**69** Show signs
**71** Palm off (on)
**73** Mooch
**75** Hangs on a clothesline
**77** Isis Naija Gaston, ___ Ice Spice
**78** Madonna's "La ___ Bonita"
**80** Kick out
**81** Planned detour
**83** "Shark Tank" shark Greiner
**84** Horror franchise that includes 1992's "Army of Darkness"
**85** It all adds up to this
**86** "West Side Story" conflict
**87** Edmund who wrote "View From the Summit"
**89** "Now, wait just one minute!"
**91** Suppress
**92** Like cheesecake vis-à-vis sponge cake
**93** "That was a close one!"
**94** What wets the appetite?
**95** "The idea!"
**96** Penny pincher
**99** Intrinsically
**101** Jazz singer Carmen
**103** Part of a plot, at times
**104** The third one is dangerous
**106** Once-common fish in the Thames
**107** Veal cordon ___
**109** Smidgen
**111** Inits. at sea

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### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | H | A | C | H | I | | | | V | E | N | D | S | | | L | O | W | E | S |
| C | O | C | O | O | N | | T | H | I | N | A | I | R | | | I | N | A | N | E |
| C | U | T | I | E | S | | V | I | N | Y | A | S | A | | | P | U | R | S | E |
| P | R | I | N | C | E | S | S | P | E | A | C | H | | | | | S | P | U | D |
| | | | | A | T | O | P | | | | P | E | A | R | L | S | | P | I | E |
| D | E | R | E | K | | Y | O | S | H | I | | S | N | O | O | T | | I | T | D |
| E | L | I | D | E | | | T | H | A | T | S | | T | O | W | R | O | P | E | |
| R | E | C | U | S | E | S | | I | M | S | A | D | | M | E | A | D | E | | |
| I | M | O | | | L | I | K | E | M | A | G | I | C | | R | I | O | | | |
| V | E | T | S | | A | P | E | D | O | M | | D | U | O | | T | R | I | A | D |
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| | L | A | Z | A | R | U | S | | P | I | N | K | S | | | M | I | L | K | S |
| C | O | M | | G | E | S | T | E | | O | S | S | I | E | | A | S | Y | E | T |
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| A | N | A | L | | | | | B | O | W | S | E | R | S | C | A | S | T | L | E |
| W | O | M | A | N | | | R | E | D | H | A | I | R | | A | T | T | A | I | N |
| L | U | I | G | I | | | A | R | I | A | N | N | A | | N | E | O | P | E | T |
| S | T | A | S | H | | | S | T | A | T | E | | | | T | D | P | A | S | S |

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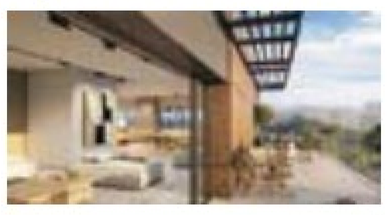
### Penthouse on Rehavia Border

Elegant 230 sqm single level penthouse, with panoramic open views. Features 4 bedrooms, 35 sqm terrace, parking and storage. Price upon request



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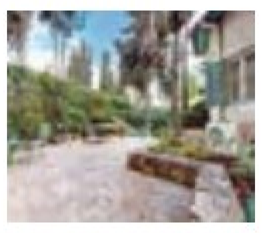
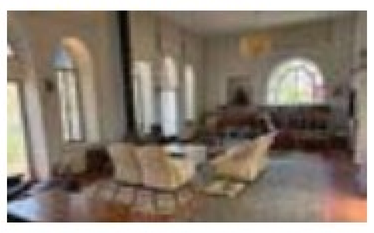
Exclusive and lovely 6 - rooms Garden apartment. With a 250 sqm private garden. Move-in condition. Potential for more.....



### Charming Ein Kerem-Rare property

170 sqm on One level-170 sqm garden, parking, Shelter.



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## REAL ESTATEREAL ESTATE

### CENTRAL JERUSALEM

Garden Apartment for Sale | New Boutique Building | Herzliya PituachAn exceptional garden apartment in a new boutique building ideally located in the heart of Herzliya Pituach, just minutes from the sea and within walking distance to shops, caf?s, and luxury hotels. 3 Bedrooms, Interior size: 145 sqm, 2.5 bathrooms (including ensuite), Expansive private garden – 120 sqm, Private swimming pool, 2 private parking spaces. Price: 8,500,000 NIS – Outstanding value for the area. Yaron Sherman | OPAL Real Estate ServicesCellular/ WhatsApp:054–5305085

#### Sales

Rare find! Rehavia (Harlap St.) 2 apartments one above the other ( 110 sqm) + 90 sqm garden), balconies, private entrances. Great potential to combine into a duplex (high ceilings!). Near synagogues, Theater, cafes, green parks, and more. Exclusive! ! Anglo Saxon 077–2315848 / 055–4549445

A charming and spacious duplex penthouse 7 rooms (194 sqm!), in quiet & Classic Talpiot. Private elevator, covered parking and storage. Near quality schools, parks, The promenade, synagogues, playgrounds. Exclusive! ! Anglo Saxon 077–2315848 / 055–4549375

On the quietest place in Rehavia! Charming 3.5–room apartment in a historic Mandate–era building high ceilings, a distinctive curved living room wall, 2 sukkah balconies. Full of character and potential. Near cafes of Gaza Street, the Valley of the Cross, the Israel Museum, Givat Ram, and public transportation. Exclusive! Anglo Saxon 077–2315848 / 055–4549396

### WESTERN JERUSALEM

#### Sales

New on the market for sale in the heart of Givat Shaul: 5–room apartment, elevator – storage room – parking – beautiful Succah balcony with a view. Central, bright, quiet, come, enjoy, make an offer!!! Hadassah Real Estate T.K.M. 058–4931070.

Prestigious Presale 1 Bedroom Apartment for Sale in Rechavia. A rare opportunity to purchase a brand–new 1–bedroom apartment in presale / pre–construction ideally located on the border of prestigious Rechavia. Property Details: Size: 45 m² interior Floor: 4th Balcony: 5.5 m² – perfect for outdoor dining and relaxation. Underfloor heating, central A/C, and electric blinds. Private storage unit included Prime Rechavia location – walking distance to synagogues, parks, cafes, and cultural attractions. High–quality construction with premium finishes. Price: ¤2,750,000

For sale in Kiryat Moshe: 5 spacious rooms. Entire floor! Complete privacy. Bright and airy with 4 air exposures. Succah balcony parking, huge bonus: a large storage room with a window, which can be used as a studio unit or clinic. Exclusive to Hadassah, 058–4931070.

Shmaryahu Levin st. (near Bayit Vegan) HUGE 10–room villa, 250 / 600 sqm, gardens and terraces, Pastoral view, quiet location, Exclusive! Anglo Saxon Jerusalem 077–2315848 / 055–4549404

### JERUSALEM SUBURBS

#### Sales

An enchanting 5 rooms (120 sqm) garden apartment in the heart of Mevaseret Zion blooming garden + patio. Well–maintained, 3 master suites, in a pastoral complex, easy access from the parking. Just a short distance from the Harel Mall, country club, schools, public transportation and more. ! Exclusive! Anglo Saxon 077–8044850 / 055–4549508

Prime location in Mevaseret–Zion (Reches Halilim) an excellent 3–room plus enclosed balcony (= additional room), quiet, "Mamad", stunning views, private parking, elevator, walking distance to shops, country club, parks, clinics, schools, and public transport. Exclusive! ! Anglo Saxon 077–8044850 / 055–4503202

In Tzur Hadassah a great opportunity for young couples or investors! A very well–kept and spacious 3–room apartment, in a boutique building (only 3 tenants!), pleasant balcony, private parking. In a central and convenient area, near commercial center, clinics, public transportation and synagogue. Exclusive! Anglo Saxon 077–2319524 / 055–4549418

In Efrat (Geffen) a beautiful 3–room apartment, 2nd floor, renovated, sukkah balcony, near park, schools, synagogues, supermarket & clinics. Best price for Efrat – only NIS 1,750,000. Exclusive! Anglo–Saxon 077–2315642 Sigalit 055–4549377

#### Rentals

For rent on a quiet cul–de–sac in Mevaseret Zion 7–room cottage, a beautiful green garden, parking, and a storage. Just a short and safe walk (with no roads to cross) from Hadror School and kindergartens, leisure activities, nature spots, and community services. ! Exclusive! Anglo Saxon 077–8044850 / 055–4335456

### RA'ANANA

#### Sales

Rothschild Real Estate

Unique rare mini–penthouse on Shvil HaZahav complex.Enjoy stunning open western view all the way to the sea. Walking distance from Ohel Ari Shul and a vibrant community. Features a spacious Sukkot terrace for ultimate hosting. 4.9M Nis.
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### JERUSALEM EST

#### sale

New on the market in Ramat Beit HaKerem in a gated complex spacious and bright 4–room apartment + perimeter garden in the Tabu (land registry), 2 covered parking spaces + 2 storage rooms. Exclusive to Haim 052–4419402.

In North Talpiot between Caspi St. & Baka, a bright & spacious 4–room apt., quiet building, sukkah balcony, 2 private parking spots, storage. Near synagogues, shops, healthcare, education, culture and leisure hubs, the Sherover promenade and public transportation . Exclusive! Anglo Saxon 077–2315848 / 055–4579170

### JERUSALEM

#### Sales

Stunning New Garden Apartment in Kiryat Shmuel on the Border of Rechavia Jerusalem, 5 bedrooms, including a completely separated income unit, 150 sqm of spacious interior living, Shabbat elevator, Private parking, Price: 7,500,000 NIS
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**Apt 190 sqm + sukkah balconies**
**Apt 111 sqm + 2 balconies**
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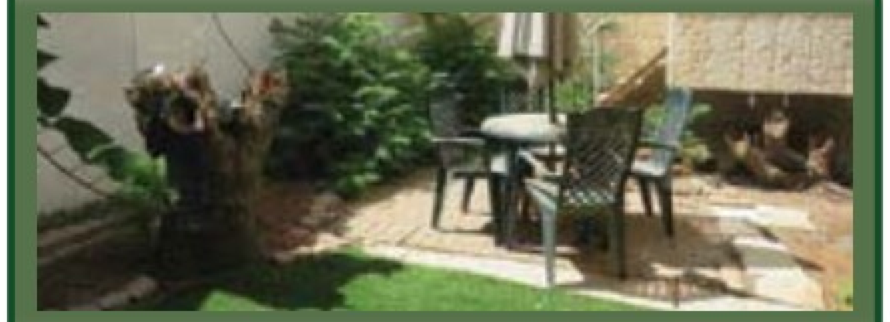

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# TELEVISION

## PROGRAMS

### KAN HD (Y/H11)

**06:04** This Morning - with Arieh Golan
**08:00** Kalman Liberman
**10:00** Kubanovick
**12:00** News Flash
**12:05** Are We Ready for Net Zero? - Episode 1
**13:00** Innovation Nation - Episode 5
**13:23** Garlic, Pepper & Olive Oil - Shlomi Shab
**14:05** Dreams of Freedom - Episode 12
**15:00** Glick and Tamar
**17:00** The World Today - with Michal Reshef and
**17:55** Kan at Six - with Maya Rachlin
**19:00** Kan News + with Sharon Davidovitch
**19:15** The Hive - Episode 10
**19:50** Kan News Edition
**21:30** Come Dine With Me 10 - Eilat Week 2
**22:02** Hapshuta - Episode 4
**22:37** Night News - with Sharon Davidovitch
**23:07** The Hive - Episode 8
**23:24** Black Gold - Episode 3

### KESHET HD (Y/H12)

**06:00** News Flash
**06:10** The Morning Headlines
**07:00** News Flash
**07:10** The Morning News - With Niv Raskin
**09:30** News Flash
**09:35** Morning News - With Nesli and Yoav
**11:00** Dancing with the Stars - Battle of the M
**12:25** Savri Maranan 8 - The First Parent War
**13:00** 12 PM
**15:00** Today"s edition - With Amalya Duek and O
**16:55** Five With - Rafi Reshef
**17:55** 6:00 P.M with...
**19:00** Seven PM with - Keren Marciano
**19:50** Main Edition
**21:30** MasterChef - Dream Team - New Season
**23:10** Guy Pines
**23:30** Avri and Sherki

### RESHET HD (Y/H13)

**06:00** This Morning - Preview
**07:00** This Morning - Omer Yardeni & Rotem Isra
**09:30** News Flash
**09:35** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
**10:00** News Flash
**10:05** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
**11:00** News Flash
**11:05** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad
**12:00** News Flash
**12:05** The Legal Countdown - Doron Herman
**12:40** Power Couple - Wedding Gone Wrong
**13:00** News Flash
**13:05** Power Couple - Wedding Gone Wrong
**14:00** News Flash
**14:05** The Daily Report
**15:00** Today"s News - Eli Rachlin
**16:55** Today"s Talk - With Lucy Aharish
**17:55** Moriya & Berko
**18:59** Election Zone - Raviv Druker
**19:50** The Main News Edition
**21:15** Power Couple - Episode 133
**23:15** The Tube - Guy Lerer
**23:35** The Past Day - With Tal Shorer
**00:00** Passport TV

### HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

**08:38** A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
**09:27** Wild Cards 3
**10:11** Leonard and Hungry Paul
**10:39** Betrayal
**11:27** A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story
**12:14** The Heart Guy 2
**13:03** Leonard and Hungry Paul
**13:30** Wild Cards 3
**14:15** Little House on the Prairie 2
**15:04** Days of Our Lives
**15:37** The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
**16:16** The Bold and The Beautiful (2 eps)
**17:04** Days of Our Lives
**17:45** The Young and the Restless, Yr. 47
**18:27** Little House on the Prairie 2
**19:16** Judge Judy 20
**19:38** Connected 8
**20:07** Connected 8
**20:32** The Five Star Weekend
**21:14** The Heart Guy 2
**22:04** The Great Chimera
**23:06** Matlock
**23:50** Metumtemet 3
**00:27** Wild Cards 3

### HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

**06:00** Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
**08:00** Nasrin 3
**08:28** The Game of Life
**09:14** Michaela
**10:01** Bat El the Virgin
**10:24** Pushers
**10:53** The Bloggers
**11:15** Nasrin 3
**11:44** The Game of Life
**12:29** Michaela
**13:17** Connected 12
**13:43** My Sister Jackie 2
**14:08** Pushers
**14:38** The Game of Life
**15:23** Michaela
**16:10** Nasrin 3
**16:42** Connected 12
**17:08** The Game of Life
**17:53** Michaela
**18:43** My Sister Jackie 2
**19:07** Nasrin 3
**19:35** Connected 12
**20:00** The Game of Life
**20:45** Michaela
**21:31** Bat El the Virgin
**21:56** Nasrin 3
**22:23** Connected 12
**22:50** The Game of Life
**23:35** Michaela
**00:22** Nasrin 3
**00:49** Bat El the Virgin
**01:14** Hezi & Sons
**01:42** My Sister Jackie 2
**02:09** I BUTTERFLY
**02:31** The Bloggers
**02:56** Full Moon
**03:21** My Sister Jackie 2
**03:45** Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

### HOT ZONE (H5)

**07:18** NCIS 23
**08:01** Law & Order 25
**08:43** Chicago PD 11
**09:25** Boston Blue
**10:07** Law & Order: SVU 27
**10:48** NCIS 23
**11:31** Law & Order 25
**12:13** NCIS: Sydney
**12:57** CIA
**13:36** Chicago PD 11
**14:18** Boston Blue
**15:00** Law & Order: SVU 27
**15:41** Law & Order 25
**16:23** NCIS: Sydney
**17:07** Chicago PD 11
**17:49** NCIS 23
**18:32** Boston Blue
**19:14** Law & Order: SVU 27
**19:55** NCIS: Sydney
**20:39** CIA
**21:18** Law & Order 25
**22:00** Boston Blue
**22:43** Chicago PD 11
**23:25** NCIS 23

### YES TV DRAMA

**07:00** Sister Boniface 2
**07:50** Friday Night Lights 5
**08:39** Our House
**09:32** Suits 5
**10:21** Yes Man
**10:49** Sister Boniface 2
**11:39** He Had It Coming
**12:04** Friday Night Lights 5
**12:53** Yes Man
**13:21** Suits 5
**14:10** Sister Boniface 2
**15:00** Yes Man
**15:34** Our House
**16:27** Suits 5
**17:16** Friday Night Lights 5
**18:05** Yes Man
**19:49** Our House
**20:35** He Had It Coming
**21:00** A Woman Of Substance
**21:49** Tip Toe
**22:36** Fellow Travelers
**23:34** The Sixth Commandment
**00:21** Hatabach 2
**00:56** Etty
**01:55** Fellow Travelers
**02:53** The Sixth Commandment

### YES TV ACTION

**06:15** Ncis 22
**07:00** Law & Order (2022) 23
**08:30** 9-1-1 Season 8
**09:15** Chicago Fire 12
**10:45** Wild Cards 3
**11:30** Librarians The Next Chapter
**12:15** Ncis 22
**13:00** Law & Order (2022) 23
**14:30** Chicago Fire 12
**16:00** Wild Cards 3
**16:45** Librarians The Next Chapter
**17:30** Ncis 22
**18:15** Law & Order (2022) 23
**19:45** 9-1-1 Season 8
**20:30** Chicago Fire 12
**22:00** Prisoner
**22:48** Cia
**23:33** Paris Has Fallen
**00:18** Taagad 2
**01:33** Paris Has Fallen
**02:21** Taagad 2

### YES TV COMEDY

**06:45** St. Denis Medical
**07:35** Community
**08:25** Habuzaglos 8
**09:35** Brooklyn 99
**10:25** That 70"s Show 3
**11:15** Married With Children 3
**12:05** 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
**12:55** The Office 8
**13:45** St. Denis Medical
**14:35** Community
**15:25** Habuzaglos 8
**16:25** Brooklyn 99
**17:15** That 70"s Show 3
**18:05** Married With Children 3
**18:55** 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
**19:45** The Office 8
**20:35** Brooklyn 99
**21:25** That 70"s Show 3
**22:15** Married With Children 3
**23:05** 3rd Rock From The Sun 2
**23:55** The Office 8
**00:35** St. Denis Medical
**01:25** Community

### MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

**11:30** The 700 Club
**12:30** It"s Supernatural
**13:00** ISN Mentoring Programming
**14:00** The Resting Place
**14:30** Kingdom Life
**15:00** Tulsa
**16:30** Our God of Wonders
**17:00** Torch Carriers
**17:30** Nuggets of Gold
**18:00** ILTV Weekly Review
**18:30** It"s Supernatural
**19:00** The 700 Club
**20:00** Classic Sitcom Block
**20:30** Classic Sitcom Block
**21:00** It"s Supernatural
**21:30** Israel Daily
**22:00** One America News Network
**23:00** Manna Fest with Perry Stone
**23:30** The Real Pro-choice
**00:00** Insider
**00:30** Tulsa

### HISTORY (Y37/H43)

**06:15** The Proof is Out There - Ep. 17
**06:55** The Unbelievable With Dan Aykroyd 2 - Ep
**07:36** Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 12
**08:17** Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 4
**08:57** Life After People 3 - Ep. 6
**09:38** Unxplained With William Shatner 7 - Ep.
**10:20** Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
**11:01** The Proof is Out There - Ep. 17
**11:41** The Unbelievable With Dan Aykroyd 2 - Ep
**12:22** Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 12
**13:03** Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 4
**13:43** Life After People 3 - Ep. 6
**14:24** Unxplained With William Shatner 7 - Ep.
**15:06** Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
**15:47** The Proof is Out There - Ep. 17
**16:27** The Unbelievable With Dan Aykroyd 2 - Ep
**17:08** Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 12
**17:50** Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 4
**18:30** Life After People 3 - Ep. 7
**19:11** History"s Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
**19:52** Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
**20:33** The Proof is Out There - Ep. 18
**21:14** Pawn Stars 25 - Ep. 1
**21:54** Ancient Aliens 16 - Ep. 13
**22:35** Holy Marvles with Dennis Quaid - Ep. 5
**23:17** Life After People 3 - Ep. 7
**23:58** History"s Greatest Picks With Mike Wolfe
**00:39** Mysteries Unearthed With Danny Trejo 2 -
**01:20** The Proof is Out There - Ep. 17
**02:00** The Unbelievable With Dan Aykroyd 2 - Ep
**02:41** Clip Time - Ep. 19
**03:11** Clip Time - Ep. 20
**03:42** Clip Time - Ep. 21
**04:11** Clip Time - Ep. 22

### CLASSICA HD

**06:14** Semi-final: Mendelssohn and Chopin
**06:36** Classica Spotlight
**07:00** Baroque Christmas Concert
**08:00** Haydn: Symphony No. 94, Hob. I:94 (2001)
**08:24** Beethoven: String Quartets No. 7 and 13
**10:01** Schumann: Fantasiestucke, Op. 73
**10:12** Napoli - Music"s Forgotten Capital
**10:45** Classica Spotlight
**11:01** Kindermann, Fischer, and Baal
**11:40** Documentary: El Sistema
**13:21** Beethoven: Symphony No. 4 (2013)
**13:54** Schumann: Carnaval, Op. 9
**14:29** Bach: Violin Sonata No. 3 (BWV 1005)
**15:03** Kristine Opolais Recital
**16:44** Brahms: Tragic Overture, Op. 81 (Honeck)
**16:59** Dance: Anastasia
**18:57** Janacek, Taffanel and Prokofiev
**20:08** Franz in Vienna: Mozart and Schoenberg
**21:16** Schubert: Four Impromptus, Op. 90
**21:27** Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 5 (2014)
**22:01** Schumann: Symphony No. 1 (Zacharias)
**22:39** IVC 2019 - Final: Duparc, Borodin et al.
**23:11** Handel: Messiah, HWV 56 (2015)
**00:23** Ueda: Someone Out There is Praying...
**00:41** Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto (Rattle)
**01:00** Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique (2001)
**01:55** Mozart Live from Beijing
**03:23** The Pianists Keys
**04:04** Verdi: Rigoletto (Frizza)

### YES DOCU (Y8)

**08:20** Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.1 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
**09:05** The Man Who Definitely Didn"t Steal "The Man Who Definitely Didn't Steal Hollywood". The film explores the scandal that unfolded as Giancarlo Parretti acquired the MGM studios, leading to an FBI investigation and his eventual downfall. Dir. John Dower.2024
**10:35** Kingdom Uncovered: Inside Saudi Arabia As Saudi Arabia bids to host the FIFA World Cup, a female journalist goes undercover to investigate what life is really like in this increasingly autocratic state. UK. 2024.
**11:45** The Dayan Dynasty - 1 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendents of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
**12:30** Menendez + Menudo... Ep.1 "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed". The true story of the two brothers, Lyle and Eric Menendez, who brutally killed their parents in Beverly Hills in 1989 and another victim in the case, who speaks for the first time. 2024
**13:25** A Case of a Lifetime - 1 (part 1) The double murder affair that shook Israel! Shmuel Bleichman informed the police that his mother and sister had disappeared. In the interrogation, the son testified, and his father was convicted. Dir.Nili Tal. 2018.
**14:10** The Great Art Fraud Ep.1 From luxury to lockup: Inigo Philbrick scammed the super-rich of the art world with 86 million dollars fraud, using lies and forgeries before his dramatic fall. Dir. Barry Ronan. UK. 2025
**15:10** The Great Art Fraud Ep.2 From luxury to lockup: Inigo Philbrick scammed the super-rich of the art world with 86 million dollars fraud, using lies and forgeries before his dramatic fall. Dir. Barry Ronan. UK. 2025
**16:10** The Trials of Alan Dershowitz Alan Dershowitz is a fierce criminal defense attorney known for representing infamous clients like Donald Trump and Jeffrey Epstein The film explores his notable victories and lesser-known losses. Dir. John Curtin. 2023
**17:55** Icons Unearthed: Marvel - Ep.2 Eight part documentary series. Cast, crew, and experts reveal never-before-heard stories about the Marvel Cinematic Universe and its most iconic film and television series of all time. 2023
**18:40** Made in Ethiopia When a massive Chinese industrial park lands in rural Ethiopia, a dusty farming town finds itself at the new frontier of globalization. Dir.: Max Duncan, Xinyan Yu. Canada, Ethiopia, UK, USA. 2024
**20:15** The Matrix: Generation The Matrix saga was born in 1999 and quickly became a pop-culture phenomenon. Its prophetic aspects will be at the heart of this unprecedented documentary. Dir. Benjamin Clavel. France. 2023
**21:10** The Dayan Dynasty - 2 Documentary series that sits for the first time in front of the camera the descendents of the tribe of Dayan who tell of the ups and downs the family has known throughout the generations. Dir. Anat Goren. Israel, 2019.
**22:00** Menendez + Menudo... Ep.2 "Menendez + Menudo: Boys Betrayed". The true story of the two brothers, Lyle and Eric Menendez, who brutally killed their parents in Beverly Hills in 1989 and another victim in the case, who speaks for the first time. 2024
**23:00** A Case of a Lifetime - 1 (part 2) The double murder affair that shook Israel! Shmuel Bleichman informed the police that his mother and sister had disappeared. In the interrogation, the son testified, and his father was convicted. Dir.Nili Tal. 2018.
**23:55** Alive: The Andes Plane Disaster - 1 When a rugby team's plane crashed in the Andes Mountains in October 1972, they were left with little hope of rescue. They faced an impossible situation: eat frozen dead bodies of their friends or die of starvation. 2023

### MEZZO FULL (H195)

**10:47** InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
**11:00** Esa-Pekka Salonen: Scriabin - Prometheus San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Jean-Yves Thibaudet (piano), Mathilde Laurent (perfumer) led by Esa-Pekka Salonen in a multi-sensory production of Scriabin's 'Prometheus, The Poem of Fire'. 2024.
**11:45** Nielsen: Symphony No. 3 (Luisi) Danish National Symphony Orchestra led by Fabio Luisi performs Carl Nielsen's Symphony No. 3, Op. 27 'Sinfonia espansiva'. DR Koncerthuset, Copenhagen, 2023.
**12:58** InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.
**13:40** Wagner: Die Walkure - Opernhaus Zurich Opera. Philharmonia Zurich led by Gianandrea Noseda. Eric Cutler (Siegmund), Christof Fischesser (Hunding), Tomasz Konieczny (Wotan), Daniela Kohler (Sieglinde), Claudia Mahnke (Fricka). Zurich, 2024.
**17:50** Yehudi Menuhin, Violin of the Century Classical.
**19:45** Francois-Xavier Roth: Stravinsky, Bach Berliner Philharmoniker and Albrecht Mayer (Oboe d'amore) led by Francois-Xavier Roth perform works by Igor Stravinsky and Johann Sebastian Bach. Baden-Baden, Festspielhaus, 2022.
**21:30** Van Cliburn Piano Competition 2025 Aristo Sham (piano) performs works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Maurice Ravel, Vitaly Starikov, Sergei Prokofiev, and Ludwig van Beethoven during the 2025 Van Cliburn Competiton.
**22:56** Jonathan Cohen: Handel, Pergolesi Les Violons du Roy, Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Tim Mead (countertenor) led by Jonathan Cohen perform works by Georg Friderich Handel, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and Antonio Vivaldi. Montreal, 2022.
**00:26** Sergiu Celibidache & Berlin Philharmonic "Magic Moments of Music". Documentary about Sergiu Celibidache and the Berlin Philharmonic. Directed by Holger Preuse and Philipp Quiring. 2023.
**01:17** Pierre Boulez: Mahler's Symphony No. 2 Staatskapelle Berlin, Staatsopernchor, Diana Damrau (soprano), and Petra Lang (alto) led by Pierre Boulez perform Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in C minor, 'Resurrection'. Philharmonie, Berlin, 2005.
**02:47** Gregory Porter at Jazzaldia Gregory Porter performs at Jazzaldia, San Sebastian, 2022.
**04:19** Pink Martini - Peralada Festival Amercian band Pink Martini, China Forbes (vocals), and Storm Large (vocals) perform at Peralada Festival, 2022.
**05:51** Dance: Mitten Wir Im Leben Sind Choreography: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker. Dancers: Bostjan Antoncic, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Marie Goudot, Julien Monty, Michael Pomero. Brussels, 2022.

## MOVIES

### HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

**06:11 Broadcasts will Resume Shortly**
**06:15 The Divergent Series: Allegiant** Action. After the earth-shattering revelations of Insurgent, Tris must escape beyond the wall to discover the shocking truth about the world around them. With: Shailene Woodley, Theo James.2016
**08:16 The Huntsman: Winter's War** Fantasy. A handsome hunter and a brave warrior try to live out their love while fighting the evil Ice Queen. With Chris Hamsworte, Emily Blunt, Charlize Theron (2016)
**10:09 Red Corner** Thriller. When a brilliant US lawyer goes to China to cut a deal, he finds himself accused of a murder he didn't commit. With Richard Gere, Ling Bai (1997)
**12:11 The Ice Road** After a remote diamond mine collapses in Canada, a 'big-rig' ice road driver must lead an impossible rescue mission. Cast: Liam Neeson, Laurence Fishburne. Dir.: Jonathan Hensleigh (USA, 2021)
**14:00 Wicked**. A young woman with green skin befriends the popular girl. An encounter with the Wonderful Wizard of Oz changes everything. Cast: Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande. Dir.: Jon M. Chu USA, 2024
**16:44 Changing Lanes** Thriller. An accident between a successful attorney and an insurance salesman turns the two into sworn enemies. Dir.: Roger Michell (USA, 2002).
**18:24 The Equalizer 2** Robert McCall serves an unflinching justice for the exploited and oppressed, but how far will he go when that is someone he loves? Cast: Chloe Grace Moretz. Dir.: Antoine Faqua (USA, 2018).
**20:24 Sleepless** A cop with a connection to the criminal underworld scours a nightclub in search of his kidnapped son. With Jamie Foxx, Michelle Monaghan, Dermot Mulroney (2017)
**22:00 Absolution** Thriller. An aging gangster attempts to rectify the mistakes in his past, but the criminal underworld won't loosen their grip willingly. Cast: Liam Neeson. Dir.: Hans Petter Moland (USA, 2024)
**23:51 Reindeer Games** After assuming his dead cellmate's identity to get with his girlfriend (Charlize Theron), an ex-con (Ben Affleck) finds himself the reluctant participant in a casino heist. (2000)
**01:34 The Black Dahlia** In an environment of secrets and lies, two detectives disclose hidden truths about the murder of a beautiful woman. Josh Hartnett, Scarlett Johansson. Dir: Brian De Palma USA, 2007

### HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

**06:27 Sharknight** A weekend at a lake house turns into a nightmare for seven vacationers as they are subjected to shark attacks. With Sara Paxton, Chris Carmack (2011).
**07:57 13 Hours:The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi** The courageous tale about a small force unit that has managed to thwart a terror attack on the American consul in Libya. Dir.: Michael Bay (USA, 2016).
**10:18 Walking Tall** A former Special Forces member must save his hometown from the drugs, violence and crime that have taken over. 2004
**11:44 Bad Genius** Thriller. A group of seniors of an entrepreneurial high school team up to take down a rigged college admissions system. Dir.: J.C. Lee (Canada, 2024).
**13:19 Edison** On discovering a den of corrupt policemen, a journalist makes shaky allies in a reporter and an investigator for a powerful district attorney. With Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey. (2005)
**14:57 47 Ronin** Based on an 18th-century tale, this fantasy epic tells the tale of clan warfare and revenge surrounding a band of 47 samurai seeking vengeance after their master is murdered. With Keanu Reeves (2013)
**16:54 Rage** When the daughter of a reformed criminal is kidnapped, he rounds up his old crew and seeks his own brand of justice. Dir.: Paco Cabezas (USA, 2014).
**18:31 Atomic Blonde** An undercover MI6 agent is sent to Berlin during the Cold War to investigate the murder of a fellow agent and recover a list of double agents. Charlize Theron, James McAvoy. 2017
**20:24 Survivor**. A foreign service officer teams up with a colleague to prove her innocence while also trying to thwart a terrorist attack. Cast:- Milla Jovovich, Pierce Brosnan. Dir.:- James McTeigue (USA, 2015)
**22:00 Wire Room**. A federal agent listens in as a target is attacked. Without burning the wire, he must protect the investigation and the target. Cast:Kevin Dillon, Bruce Willis. Dir:Matt Eskandari (USA 2022)
**23:35 Damaged** Thriller. A Chicago detective travels to Scotland to work with a local detective following the resurgence of a serial killer. Dir.: Terry McDonough (USA, 2024)
**01:11 Jolt**. A bouncer with a slightly murderous anger-management problem uses an electrode-lined vest to shock herself back to normalcy. Dir.: Tanya Wexler (USA, 2021).
**02:41 Bad Country** When a Baton Rouge police detective busts a contract killer, he convinces him to become an informant and rat out the South's most powerful crime ring. With Tom Berenger (2014)

### HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

**06:26 Old Guy** Comedy. A contract killer facing the end of his career is thrilled when The Company asks him to train Gen Z newcomer Wihlborg. (UK, 2024).
**08:00 Maverick** Bret Maverick, needing money for a poker tournament, faces various comic mishaps and challenges, including a charming woman thief. (1994)
**10:06 The Ages of Love**. In Italy three men fall in love with three different women. Cast: Robert De Niro. Dir.: Giovanni Veronesi (USA, 2012).
**12:12 The Wedding Year**. A commitment-phobic 27 year old's relationship is put to the test when she and her new boyfriend go to 7 weddings in the same year. Dir.: Robert Luketic (USA, 2019).
**13:47 Running on Empty**. When Mort discovers he has less than a year to live, he joins a dating service that matches people by their death dates. Cast: Lucy Hale, Keir Gilchrist. Dir.: Daniel Andre (USA, 2024).
**15:18 Bridget Jones's Diary** Romantic Comedy. A 30 year old singleton determined to change her life debates between her unfaithful boss and a charming lawyer. Cast: Renee Zellweger, Hugh Grant. Dir.: Sharon Maguire (UK, 2001).
**16:56 A Moroccan Affair** Comedy. Follows the Diaz-Aguirre family, whose perfect universe turns upside down after the death of the patriarch. Cast: Julian Lopez. Dir.: Alvaro Fernandez Armero (Spain, 2023).
**18:34 You Don't Mess with the Zohan** An Israeli Special Forces Soldier fakes his death so he can re-emerge in New York City as a hair stylist. Cast: Adam Sandler, John Turturro. Dir.: Dennis Dugan USA, 2008
**20:27 Hancock** Action. A superhero who the public has fallen out of love with tries to become popular once again with the help of an optimistic PR man. Cast: Will Smith, Charlize Theron. Dir: Peter Berg (USA, 2008).
**22:00 The Whole Nine Yards** When a new neighbor moves in, Nick discovers that it is Jimmy "The Tulip.". His wife convinces him to go to Chicago and inform the mob boss who wants Jimmy dead. With Bruce Willis.(2000)
**23:37 The Naked Gun** Following in his father's footsteps, a detective works to solve a murder case and save his police department from closure. Dir.: Akiva Schaffer (USA, 2025)
**01:02 Zoolander** At the end of his career, a clueless fashion model is brainwashed to kill the prime minister of Malaysia. (2001)
**02:31 She's Funny That Way** On the set of a playwright's new project, a love triangle forms between his wife, her ex-lover, and A call girl. Dir.: Peter Bogdanovich (USA, 2015).

### HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

**07:35 My Penguin Friend** Drama. Inspired by a true story; a lost penguin rescued from an oil spill transforms the life of a heartbroken fisherman. Dir.: David Schurmann (Brazil, 2024)
**09:13 Bob Trevino Likes It** Comedy. Lonely 20-something Lily Trevino accidentally befriends a stranger online who shares the same name as her own self-centered father. Dir.: Tracie Laymon (USA, 2024).
**10:54 Reawakening** Drama. A couple whose daughter aged 14 went missing and then reappears after a decade. Cast: Jared Harris. Dir.: Virginia Gilbert (UK, 2024).
**12:25 Official Secrets** The true story of a British whistleblower who leaked information to the press about an illegal NSA spy operation. Dir.: Gavin Hood (UK, 2019).
**14:22 The Survivor** Harry Haft is a boxer who fought against his peers in concentration camps. After WWII, he tries to use fighting legends as a way to find his love. Cast:Ben Foster. Dir.:Barry Levinson (Canada, 2021).
**16:29 Emperor** As the Japanese surrender at the end of WWII, a US general and his aide must decide how to treat the emperor and if he should be executed for war crimes. With Matthew Fox, Tommy Lee Jones (2012)
**18:15 After the Wedding**. A manager of an orphanage in Kolkata travels to New York to meet a benefactor. Bart Freundlich USA, 2019
**20:07 The Age of Adaline** A young woman remains ageless after an accident. After years of a solitary life, she meets a man who complicates the eternal life she's become used to. (2015)
**22:00 Knock Knock** When a devoted husband is left home alone for the weekend, two young women knock on his door to ask for help. What starts out as a kind gesture results in a dangerous seduction. With Keanu Reeves (2015)
**23:39 Holland** Thriller. A woman's picture-perfect life in quaint Holland, Michigan, crumbles when she and a friend uncover a twisted secret in their midst. Cast: Nicole Kidman. Dir.: Mimi Cave (USA, 2025).
**01:27 Lovelace** The story of Linda Lovelace, who was used and abused by the porn industry and her husband before taking control of her life. With Amanda Seyfried, Peter Sarsgaard, James Franco (2013)
**03:00 The Translators** Nine translators are hired to translate the last part of a famed trilogy. The job turns into a nightmare as the first ten pages are leaked. Dir:Regis Roinsard

### YES MOVIES DRAMA (1)

**08:28 Eichmann Show** Dramatization of the team hoping to televise the trial of Adolf Eichmann. It focuses on Leo Hurwitz, a documentary filmmaker and Milton Fruchtman, a producer. (2015)
**10:06 Love's Second Act** A filmmaker who needs inspiration to finish her screenplay after a studio buys the pitch. She finds it in ex-boyfriend who still works at the small town movie theater where they both first fell in love. Dir. Sam Irvin. 2024.
**11:38 Mother's Day** The different stories of four mothers and a single father and what the idea of Mother's Day means to them. With Julia Roberts, Jennifer Aniston, Kate Hudson. Dir. Garry Marshall. (2015)
**13:37 Darling Companion** The story of a woman who loves her dog more than her husband. And then her husband loses the dog. (2012)
**15:22 Wicked** Elphaba, a misunderstood young woman because of her green skin, and Galinda, a popular girl, become friends at Shiz University in the Land of Oz. Dir: Jon M. Chu. 2024
**18:08 Conviction** A young mother puts herself through law school in an effort to represent her brother, who's been wrongfully convicted of murder and has been prisoned for life. Dir. Tony Goldwyn. 2010.
**19:56 Brazil Ahuvati Aka Back To Maracana** Three generations of men travel to Brazil, the grandfather's homeland, to watch the World Cup. The unplanned trip turns into an exciting journey. Dir. Jorge Gurvich. Israel-Brazil, 2019
**21:30 Miss You Already** Drama. Two old friends keep in touch in spite of their differences. Their relationship is put to the test, however, when one of them contracts cancer. With Drew Barrymore (2015)
**23:23 Sing Sing** Divine G, imprisoned at Sing Sing for a crime he didn't commit, finds purpose by acting in a prison theatre group. Dir: Greg Kwedar. USA, 2023.

### YES MOVIES ACTION (2)

**09:02 The Ice Road** After a remote diamond mine collapses in far northern Canada, a 'big-rig' ice road driver must lead an impossible rescue mission over a frozen ocean to save the trapped miners. 2021
**10:52 Play Dirty** A ruthless thief and his expert crew stumble onto the heist of a lifetime. Dir: Shane Black. USA, 2025.
**12:58 Jack Reacher: Never Go Back** To clear his name Jack Reacher must uncover the truth behind a major government conspiracy. 2016
**14:57 Collide** An American backpacker gets involved with a ring of drug smugglers as their driver, though he winds up on the run from his employers across Cologne's high-speed Autobahn. (2016)
**16:37 Smart Chase** Action. A washed-up private security agent has to escort a valuable Chinese antique out of Shanghai but is ambushed en route. China, 2017.
**18:12 The Outpost** A small team of U.S. soldiers battle against hundreds of Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. With: Scott Eastwood, Caleb Landry Jones, Orlando Bloom. Director: Rod Lurie. USA, 2020.
**20:16 The Expendables 2** Mr. Church reunites his guns for an easy job, but the mission quickly goes awry. (2012)
**22:00 John Rambo** In Thailand, John Rambo joins a group of mercenaries to venture into war-torn Burma and rescue a group of Christian aid workers. Cast: Sylvester Stallone, Julie Benz (2008)
**23:33 The Colony** Forced underground by a new ice age, survivors must fight to preserve humanity against a threat even more savage than nature. Laurence Fishburne, Kevin Zegers, Bill Paxton (2013)

### YES MOVIES COMEDY (3)

**08:21 Surviving Christmas** A lonely, obnoxious young millionaire pays a family to spend Christmas with him. Cast: Ben Affleck, James Gandolfini, Christina Applegate, Catherine O'Hara. (2004)
**09:53 Liar Liar** A fast track lawyer can't lie for 24 hours due to his son's birthday wish after the lawyer turns his son down for the last time. Cast: Jim Carrey, Maura Tierney. Dir. Tom Shadyac. USA, 1997.
**11:21 Jumanji: Welcome To The Jungle** Adventure. Four teenagers are sucked into a magical video game, and the only way they can escape is to work together to finish the game. With: Dwayne Johnson (The Rock), Jack Black. Dir: Jake Kasdan. USA, 2017.
**13:21 Mean Machine** Action comedy. An ex-football star jailed for three years heads a group of inmates in a match against the prison guards. (UK, 2001)
**15:02 Surviving Christmas** A lonely, obnoxious young millionaire pays a family to spend Christmas with him. Cast: Ben Affleck, James Gandolfini, Christina Applegate, Catherine O'Hara. (2004)
**16:34 Bad Moms**. When three overworked mothers are pushed beyond their limits, they ditch their conventional responsibilities for a jolt of long overdue freedom and fun. With Mila Kunis, Kristen Bell. (2016)
**18:16 Astolfo** Astolfo, a retired professor evicted from his apartment, decides to move into an old noble but decrepit palace. Dir: Gianni Di Gregorio. France-Italy, 2022
**19:49 Poolman**. An optimist and native Angeleno pool cleaner is tasked to uncover the truth behind a shady business deal, and enlists his friends to take on a corrupt politician and a greedy land developer. With: Chris Pine. 2023.
**21:30 The Hitman"s Wife"s Bodyguard** The bodyguard Michael Bryce continues his friendship with assassin Darius Kincaid as they try to save Darius' wife Sonia. Dir: Patrick Hughes. 2021.
**23:27 Central Intelligence**. After he reconnects with an awkward pal from high school, a mild-mannered accountant is lured into the world of international espionage. (2016) .

# ‘Hill 338’ tries to capture spirit of ‘Givat Halfon’

**FILM REVIEW**

• By HANNAH BROWN

*Hill 338*, which just opened, is billed as a tribute to the beloved classic *Halfon Hill Doesn’t Answer* by Assi Dayan, which came out 50 years ago, rather than as a remake or a sequel.

How much you like the new movie may depend on how you felt about *Halfon Hill*. The original is lauded nostalgically today but may not be the greatest experience to sit through if you did not grow up with it. Like many Israeli films of that era, it has moments of great shtick, sandwiched in between scenes of slapstick comedy and sentimental plotlines that have not all aged that well.

The most cherished element of the original is its cast, which featured the iconic Hagashash Hahiver comedy trio – Shaike Levi, Yisrael “Poli” Poliakov, and Gavri Banai.

Fans will be pleased to learn that Shaike Levi makes a brief appearance reprising his role and utters a version of one of the earlier film’s catchphrases, and that Yael Poliakov, the daughter of the late Poli, has a leading role, playing Maggie, the commander of the godforsaken desert army base, this time located not in the Sinai but near the Jordanian border.

Lior Dayan, son of the late Assi Dayan, is one of the writers, which was directed by Erez Ben Harush, and the writers have made sure there are many nods to the original, including the music and scenes that closely replicate moments from the first film. All of this will make fans of the original nod in recognition, but will not strike the same chord with those who do not remember *Halfon Hill*.

*Hill 338* updates its source material in ways that are often clever, as it attempts to create a nostalgia-fest and function as a contemporary comedy at the same time. Viewers should keep in mind the ethos of *Halfon Hill* while watching it, because it works best when you see this rundown, inefficient base as a metaphor for Israel, with all its quirks and problems.

SHAHAR HASON (right) and Eli Yatzpan in ‘Hill 338.’ (Itzik Portal/Courtesy United King Films)

For some, there may be moments when it is difficult to laugh at how poorly the base is run, in light of how quickly several bases in the South were overrun by terrorists on Oct. 7.

*Hill 338* gets going when a high-level commander (Tal Friedman) at the Kirya – who is manic and has trouble controlling his prosthetic arm, a clear reference to the title character in *Dr. Strangelove* – calls in a young officer, Ran (Avraham Arenson), who is preparing for his wedding, and orders him to close a desert base that does nothing anymore, but which is considered home by its staff.

This commander’s eccentricities are meant to evoke laughs, and there are jokes about his prosthesis, which may not be as funny as they would have been before 2023, given all the soldiers who have lost limbs in combat over the last few years.

Ran hurries off to the base, where he meets its madcap staff, which represents a cross section of Israeli life: two blasé but brilliant reservists who guard the entrance; the blunt but endearingly unpretentious commander, Maggie (Yael Poliakov), who is having a baby via a Russian surrogate; an animal-loving Russian soldier; an Ethiopian soldier; a group of Bedouin scouts who have been joined by a Jew (Uri Gottlieb), who feels like a Bedouin; Menahem (Gal Linker), a religious soldier with Down syndrome who runs the commissary and turns out to have sharper powers of observation than any other soldier on the base; a trans soldier who is accepted by all and who serves organic produce in the cafeteria; and a few other oddball characters.

Amit (Kim Or Azulay), Ran’s sweetheart, is there, too, and soon her father (Eli Yatzpan, in his first major film role in years) joins them. His building has collapsed and he needs a place to crash. It is he who carries the spirit of the previous film the most, as he becomes a confidant to most of the base.

He also gets involved in the main scheme. It turns out that a reservist (Shahar Hason) is running a livestream from the base’s secret bunker, where he sells Bitcoin, with Maggie’s approval, which pulls the story into the 21st century.

The other plotline is that the base is not being closed because of a real military reorganization, but because it has been sold to a Chinese corporation.

There are a lot of army jokes, particularly about the acronyms, which no one can seem to keep track of, and the acronym for Ran’s position in KAFKA, a dig at the military bureaucracy.

There is also plenty of politically incorrect and gross-out humor, which is probably why the movie is being released in the heat of August.

But the movie is sensitive to the character of Menahem, the disabled soldier, and even gives him the lines that articulate the movie’s message about loyalty and sticking together.

Those who are curious about the movie but are on the fence might want to take a look at the original, clips from which are widely available on YouTube, or even rent the first film from the Israel Film Archive.

If the prospect of seeing the film’s atmosphere transferred to a new era appeals to you, then give it a try. Otherwise, just watch the clips of *Halfon Hill Doesn’t Answer* again.

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# *Movies under the stars come to Israel’s national parks*

• By HANNAH BROWN

If you’re looking for something to do with the kids, here’s a great idea: the Israel Nature and Parks Authority is presenting family films at ancient fortresses, Roman amphitheaters, desert landscapes, a hill overlooking the shores of the Kinneret, and other outdoor venues around the country this month.

The low-cost midweek events, part of the authority’s Summer at the Movies program, will combine films with guided tours, games, sunset views, and visits to some of Israel’s best-known historical sites.

Summer evenings offer visitors an opportunity to experience the parks after the hottest hours of the day, when the sites take on a quieter and more relaxed atmosphere.

“Evening hours give the national parks and nature reserves a different character – calmer, quieter, and more pleasant,” said Sarit Falchi Miara, the Nature and Parks Authority’s northern district director of visitor services and the visitor experience.

“We invite the public to visit the national parks and nature reserves during the more pleasant hours of the day, enjoy the unique atmosphere, and experience nature in another way.”

Admission is by advance registration through the Nature and Parks Authority website. Matmon members and residents of Yehiam are eligible for discounted admission.

At the Yehiam Fortress National Park in the Western Galilee, visitors can spend an evening exploring the remains of the Crusader and Ottoman fortress before watching the animated family film *Night of the Zoopocalypse* within its ancient walls. Visitors will be able to climb the fortress towers and enjoy views of the Western Galilee before the screening.

Sussita (Hippos) National Park, overlooking Lake Kinneret, will host a screening of *Zootopia 2*. Before the movie, visitors can join a guided tour among the remains of the ancient city, see its basalt columns, and learn about the history of Sussita while watching the sunset over the lake.

The Good Samaritan Museum, near Ma’aleh Adumim, will present two outdoor animation screenings surrounded by the site’s collection of ancient mosaics. *Tom and Jerry: The Lost Compass* and *Friends on Full* will be shown during the month at separate screenings.

A SCREENING at Yehiam Fortress National Park.
(Sharon Goldezon/Courtesy of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority)

The Herodium National Park will also present *Zootopia 2,* against the backdrop of the remains of King Herod’s palace. Visitors will be able to take in the views from the summit and explore the site at sunset before the screening.

At the Tzipori National Park, families can combine an interactive historical adventure with a movie in the site’s ancient Roman theater, and visitors can take part in Mysteries in Time, a game that leads participants along the park’s paths, past its ancient buildings and celebrated mosaics. After completing the activities, families can gather in the Roman theater for a screening of *Ice Age: Collision Course*. Advance registration is required, and Matmon members receive discounted admission.

The Nature and Parks Authority’s annual Matmon membership includes free admission to approximately 65 national parks and nature reserves, as well as discounts on campsites, guided tours, and selected activities. A newly launched Matmon application also provides members with a digital membership card, QR-code entry, information about benefits and events, and navigation to nearby parks and reserves.

*Visit the website for more information and the full schedule of the events. parks.org.il/category/summer-activities*

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# Sci-fi thriller ‘The Last House’ feels unmoored

**TV REVIEW**

• By DOMINIC BAEZ

The premise of *The Last House*, the new sci-fi thriller from Netflix, is promising: A family, helmed by the always watchable Greta Lee and Wagner Moura, is trapped in a house by forces beyond their understanding.

Days turn into weeks, and then months; a full fridge slowly empties out; hopes of rescue dim into a near-palpable despair. But for as often as that premise keeps you interested in what happens next:

What’s lurking outside the unopenable windows and doors?

Why won’t it stop raining?

Will they survive?

*The Last House* just as often leaves you feeling confused.

Directed by Louis Leterrier from a script by Matthew Robinson, the Seattle-set film (highlighted by establishing shots of the Space Needle, apparently our only recognizable feature) lacks any real focus.

It bounces between themes but never allows the individual elements to coalesce into anything resembling a through line.

Once they’re trapped in their home and it begins raining incessantly (there’s a joke about Seattle weather to be made here), dad Jason and mom Ann (Moura and Lee, respectively, and the best part of *The Last House*) emphasize the importance of family and resilience to their children.

But that message gets muddled by clumsy execution; it’s hard to identify with a family that’s so incredibly calm, collected and capable that it takes them weeks to freak out about not being able to go outside.

There are messages of community and how we treat the creatures we share this planet with, but they, too, are incoherent, falling by the wayside as the threats of running out of food and whatever’s keeping them trapped become ever more present.

Even the latter issue, which is affecting more than just this family and this house, feels jumbled, taut and thrilling one minute and utterly confusing the next.

The visual work throughout does help mitigate some of the staccato narrative, though.

The cinematography is generally on point, especially with how it plays with water and sunlight.

(There are moments when the film seems to want to blind you with retina-burning brightness, though I applaud the film bucking the recent trend of making everything so dark you can’t tell what’s happening onscreen.)

A hand-drawn calendar marking the passage of time is a breathtaking wonder, full of gorgeous, childlike whimsy.

And the house itself feels like its own character, part of the family as it goes through this hell.

(A piece of advice: Make sure you own more DVDs than just *Air Force One* and *Annie*.)

Still, *The Last House* just doesn’t seem to know what it wants to be. Aside from some worthwhile performances from Moura and Lee as parents willing to do anything to save their children, there’s nothing to tether yourself to, no real narrative anchor point that’s anything more than a discombobulated message of the power of family.

It’s an important message, but in *The Last House*, it just sinks under the waterlogged weight of everything else.

(The Seattle Times/TNS)

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# ‘Ice Cream Man’: Eli Roth serves gooey, gory scoop of horror

**FILM REVIEW**

• By MARK MESZOROS

‘Eli Roth is a special kind of disturbed.”

That’s by no means a clinical psychological diagnosis – I’m not remotely qualified to make one – but it is the thought I had early and often while taking in the director’s new serving of absurd but unsettling horror, *Ice Cream Man*.

In theaters this week, Roth’s 10th movie takes one of the purest of American institutions, the ice cream man – who, roaming suburbia via a music-emitting van, overcharges parents for cool, sugary treats their kids see as something that will make a summer day epic – and turns him into something truly evil.

Roth is not the first to do this, of course – among the offerings vilifying this purveyor of delights is a 1995 movie with the same title as this flick – but Roth’s enjoyable-in-its-way *Ice Cream Man* may be the first in which the titular figure uses his desserts to turn children into feral zombie-like beings.

That’s cold, bro.

Stemming from a dream Roth had more than two decades ago that, according to the movie’s production notes, was “oozing with dread and viscera, and sticky with the relentless drip of slowly melting ice cream,” the unrated *Ice Cream Man* is set in the seemingly idyllic Bayleen Bay. There, with a few days until summer break, kids jump rope, run around and play baseball.

And, obviously, they eagerly accept the chilled products handed out by a thin, mustachioed ice cream man (Ari Millen, *Orphan Black*). While 12-year-old Jared (Charlie Zeltzer, *The Handmaid’s Tale*) is among them, his older sister, Lizzie (Sarah Abbott, *Black Mirror*), forbids him to eat it due to his lactose intolerance. (Finally, the lactose-intolerant boy will get to be the hero!)

Hours later, those who consumed the frozen treasures – some of which, by the way, have concerning names such as the Creepy Crawly – are murdering their parents in decidedly gruesome ways. (Not one but two children employ saws.)

Things aren’t much better the next day at school, where the kids arrive as seemingly mindless drones, causing one teacher to ask whether this is “some sort of zombie/pajama day challenge.” He should be only so lucky.

When The Ice Cream Man arrives with a well-stocked van, the mayhem begins again. I’ll spare you most of the gory – and I do mean “gory” – details, but know that an ice cream scooper is used to accomplish a task for which it was certainly not designed.

Jared teams up with a couple of other unaffected students, Mia (Kiori Mirza Waldman) and Tommy (Shiloh O’Reilly), to escape the school. They eventually meet up with Lizzie, who has reluctantly enlisted the help of her ex-boyfriend, Chris (Dylan Hawco), and try to defeat this evil – by attempting to follow a complicated set of instructions from a priest (Benjamin Byron Davis) with ties to The Ice Cream Man.

I MUST admit I am anything but well-versed in Roth’s work, which ranges from 2005’s *Hostel*, which earned the label “torture porn,” to 2023 holiday slasher *Thanksgiving*. (His most recent effort was 2024’s extremely poorly reviewed *Borderlands*, the science-fiction action comedy adaptation of the video game series.)

ARI MILLEN plays a thin, mustachioed ice cream man in Eli Roth’s horror film. (Courtesy The Horror Section 2026/TNS)

Best I can tell, *Ice Cream Man* is closest in tone to his directorial debut, the 2002 comedy horror romp *Cabin Fever*, which was somewhat well received by critics and surely has its fans.

Beyond moments that had me turning my head way in shock, there’s not much here for me; the storytelling is uninteresting, the characters vaguely better than bland and the performances run-of-the-mill. However, there *is* much for those truly in it for the gore. If the appeal is discovering what grotesque occurrences Roth and co-writer Noah Belson have cooked up, trust that the pair have packed plenty into the sub-90-minute affair.

Roth also portrays the father of Jared and Lizzy in the movie.

This is a bright and, in its way, cheery slice of cinema from Roth that pairs surprisingly well with a sunny day.

Bring your appetite for blood. But maybe lay off the ice cream.

(The News-Herald, Willoughby, Ohio/TNS)*